

FRANCESCO ROSI: AN AUTEUR?

the cinema of Francesco Rosi

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by

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## ABSTRACT

Auteurist approaches developed in the 1950s studied films as a means of personal expression, valuing those directors who could bring an individual quality to their films as 'auteurs'. More recent theories of subjectivity and textuality have displaced the centrality of the director as author of meanings in the film texts, but have had difficulty in explaining the continued importance accorded to directors in interviews and writing about their films. The interaction of directorial intention, film industry, and the use of other media to communicate the director's ideas to audiences is an area of continued theoretical concern.

It is the aim of this work firstly to examine how Francesco Rosi has managed to constitute himself as an 'auteur' within the institutional structures of the Italian film industry, and the constraints which these impose.

Between 1958 and today Rosi has made fifteen films, the majority of which to a greater or lesser extent engage with the reality of contemporary Italy. He works within the mainstream of the Italian film industry. His work can, however, be located within that narrow band of 1 - 2% of films produced each season which can be designated 'art' or 'quality' cinema, as opposed to more or less formulaic genre products. This study aims to show that the institutional structures of the Italian film - and latterly media - industries have a primary influence both on the particular narrative patterns Rosi has at his disposal, and on the particular types of films which Rosi as director is financed to make.

Secondly, I examine elements of Rosi's films which mark him out as an 'auteur'. Through close textual analysis, I identify recurring visual, rhetorical and narrative choices which can be shown to signal the presence of the 'auteur', Rosi, in the film texts, and to constitute his style.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the transcription of screenplays:-

bkview	backview
bw	black and white
cu	close-up
ecu	extreme close-up
eha	extreme high angle
els	extreme long shot
ext	exterior
1st	first
ha	high angle
hs	head and shoulders
int	interior
l	left
la	low angle
lg	large
lh	left-hand
ls	long shot
mcu	medium close-up
ms	medium shot
pa	plan américain
pov	point-of-view
r	right
rh	right-hand
rs	reverse shot
v	very
wa	wide angle

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A photograph is a secret  
about a secret.  
The more it tells you,  
the less you know.

Diane Arbus, 1923-1971

La tendenza del mondo occidentale, europeo  
in particolare, è quella di esorcizzare il  
male proiettandolo su etnie e su comporta-  
menti diversi dai nostri. Ma se vogliamo  
combattere la mafia, non dobbiamo trasformarla  
in un mostro né pensare che sia una piovra o  
un cancro. Dobbiamo pensare che ci rassomiglia.

Giovanni Falcone, 1939-1992

## INTRODUCTION

The impetus for this research project was the experience of pleasure. In 1977 I discovered the work of Leonardo Sciascia via the outline of an Extra-Mural course on recent Italian literature and my curiosity was sufficiently aroused to start on an erratic programme of reading his books. That summer the National Film Theatre offered a screening of Cadaveri eccellenti, based on Sciascia's Il contesto, as part of a season devoted to Francesco Rosi, a complete retrospective of his work to date. Rosi's work intrigued me on many levels - its visual beauty, its invitations to become involved in the solving of puzzles, its seriousness and political agenda, and, not least, its Italianness.

I proceeded to discover Rosi and formulated this research proposal for University College London. From the very beginning, however, the way Francesco Rosi was spoken and written of, the way his work was considered in the public arena, such as the National Film Theatre, was at odds with theoretical considerations of the role of the director, or author.

Film theory has had, and continues to have, difficulties in coming to terms with the idea of a person as the author of a text or texts. On the other hand, film critics and those who market films appear to have no difficulty in attributing the creative impulse behind a film to its director. In the late 1970s Bill Nichols suggested that the whole question of authorship was "less resolved than repressed<sup>1</sup>", but the fact that the subject continues to occupy such a large amount of space in anthologies and text books on cinema indicates that



the suppression is ineffective, and that it remains a question with which we still have to come to terms.

Francesco Rosi started his career in the Italian film industry as Assistant Director to Luchino Visconti on La terra trema and made his début as a director with La sfida in 1958. His reputation was established with Salvatore Giuliano in 1962 and, despite criticism, he is one of the few directors currently operating in Italy who still engages with contemporary social issues.

In choosing to consider Francesco Rosi as the 'author' of his films, we must examine the idea of the author in its historical, critical and industrial context. The changing role of the author is emblematic of the swings and roundabouts of critical fashion. It is not the purpose of this work to catalogue the detailed shifts of emphasis in the study of authorship. This study will, therefore, begin by examining the advantages and disadvantages of some of the theoretical models of the main developments in auteur study.

# 1. Theoretical models for the study of the author

## Auteur theory and the 'politique des auteurs'

The flood of US films whose export to axis countries had been blocked by the war had profound effects on the European film industries in the 1950s. They were new and different, they were the product of the 'winning side', and that spurious glamour was attached to them initially and was reflected at the box office. Equally important was their critical effect. Many French and Italian critics had to profoundly rethink their approach to these films and often experienced considerable difficulty in bending critical theory to validate

particular favourite films. Directors who were particularly admired were given the status of 'auteurs', even if, up until then, they had been firmly regarded as studio hacks. The myth grew up of the courageous auteur battling with the wicked/philistine studio bosses to present his individual artistic vision and even when failing for the most part, still managing to leave on the screen those individual touches which could be regarded as his personal style.

The role of the director was considered similar to that of an author as controller of meaning in the text for, if meanings exist, it was considered that someone must have put them there. This idea in itself is a product of the profound changes in artistic sensibility and in the role of the artist which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Interestingly it was allied to the emergence of a new class, the bourgeoisie, with the disposable income necessary to acquire art works which had previously been the province of the church or the aristocracy. Romantic sensibility elevated the author to the status of his/her heroes, to that of a naïve genius who could also support him/herself from art production, but marginalized from positions of potential disruption to the status quo. Studies of the work of an artist sought explanations for meanings perceived in the texts in the psychology of the individual artist, his/her personal history and in the history of his/her time.

The 'politique des auteurs' of the 1950s had amongst its aims the raising of the cultural status of cinema; the validation of European cinema as something worthwhile and to be

distinguished from that of the USA; and the validation, as I have mentioned before, of those Hollywood directors admired by the French. In a period marked by debates on whether film was an art, the development in writing about film of some recognizable parallels to literary studies was seen as a strategy for conferring respectability and status on the field. Assigning the status of an author to a filmmaker allowed the work of a director to be considered over time, individual films to be examined for the presence of recurrent themes and motifs, and for an individual corpus of work to be examined in relation to a national cinema or film movement. These critical studies marked the emergence of a younger group of filmmakers, making their bid for power and a place in the French film industry by rejecting the strategies of the old guard - reliance on literary adaptations and 'well-made' films with heavily-worked sets and psychologically consistent characters. It also marked a class shift in that the new group were not only younger, but also mainly from the lower middle classes, although still very bourgeois in formation. They made a distinction between 'auteurs' (directors who were serious and creative) and mere 'metteurs en scene' (directors who were mere technicians, unable to stamp the raw material of film with their own personal vision).

The critical and artistic ferment which French critics engendered in the 1950s had the effect of opening up new ways of thinking about films, new work on style and themes and, more importantly, it revitalized the 'art' cinema sector of cinematic production. Critical consideration of the work of a cinematic 'auteur' or director generally concentrated on the

director's ideas and events in his/her life to explain text events in the films. François Truffaut's work on Alfred Hitchcock is an example of this approach, whilst Eric Rohmer's on Murnau identified stylistic traits in Murnau's creation and use of cinematic space.

The motivation behind the work of Truffaut and the young critics associated with Cahiers du Cinéma in the 1950s may have been historically specific (the validating of their own cinematic tastes for US popular films, and their bid for cultural power in the postwar period), but their stress on the analysis of the formal, cinematic properties of film texts - mise en scène, montage - provided the ground work for future study of the medium. Auteur study insisted that formula films, made in Hollywood by directors working in the studio system with supposedly very little room for creative manoeuvre, could, through detailed textual study, reveal traces of individual creativity. Auteur study paved the way for reassessment of films which were not all serious, or realist - such as genre films, popular films.

André Bazin's early work on neorealist films and directors had made a case for realism and the effacement of marks of authorship as a criterion of quality. For Bazin, what was important was that film should seek "to give the spectator as perfect an illusion of reality as possible within the limits of the logical demands of cinematographic narrative and of the current limits of technique"<sup>2</sup>, that is, that the cinematic representation of the social reality of, say, 1940s Italy should correspond as exactly as possible to the experience of that reality. The filmmaker might well leave gaps in the



narrative, as Rossellini did, but in making connections between narrative events, the spectator would perceive the overwhelming impression of the arbitrariness and accidental quality of events. Bazin suggested that the style of filmmaking which conveyed this feeling of the rawness and ambiguity of events was one closest to how people perceive the world around them - the mobile camera in the long take, and the composition in depth. The spectator would have the illusion of making their own discovery of what was important by scanning the screen, rather than having a meaning imposed by montage, the juxtaposition of images. Neorealist filmmakers did not overtly seek to persuade of the validity of their representation of history but relied on aesthetic technique to construct an illusion of "reality as a whole"<sup>3</sup> from which the spectator would be able to comprehend social relationships. Like Bazin, French auteur theorists of the 1950s ascribed value to films and filmmakers displaying a certain moral, spiritual or ethical preoccupation, and a coherence in the development of themes. We will return to the question of realism in Chapter 3.

Auteur theory had the disadvantage of down-playing the interaction between the filmmaker and the film industry and of ignoring the fact that films are industrial products, firmly integrated within a capitalist mode of production and a definable range of market structures. Mainstream feature films are extremely costly to produce; even small productions involve considerable financial investment and a significant number of creative and service personnel. Even when auteur theory dominated in theoretical circles, the stress on



individual creativity hampered consideration of the collaborative and industrial nature of film production.

Critical emphasis on 'auteurs', their personal history and psychology to explain themes and events within the film texts, denied the importance of the industrial and social context in relation to the form of the film. Studying great directors as 'auteurs' often ignored their historical and social formation, the role of the audience and the audience's pleasure in the text. It also took no account of how different audiences relate to texts, or the presence of ideological meanings in the text not presented via the author, thus assuming that a film text was timeless and not subject to changes of meaning. Also not taken into account were the effects of cinema on society, of society on cinema (through consideration of the workings of ideology, economic and technological structures) and the effects of films on other films.

Thus, whilst Francesco Rosi himself continually stresses his own control of the creative process in his oeuvre:-

"Je participe dans chaque film à toutes les opérations; c'est toujours moi qui ai l'idée du sujet, même si le scénario est écrit en collaboration"

this signalling of himself as an artist who shapes the content of his films in fact shifts attention from the equally interesting work that he has to accomplish to create and maintain a position within the film industry.

Of equal interest is the fact that, although he makes similarly insistent claims to serious themes and realist approaches<sup>5</sup>, his work does not, as we shall show, display consistent adherence to these claims. His work includes a fantasy fairy story, C'era una volta (1967), a bull-fighting

biopic, Il momento della verità (1965), and an opera adaptation, Carmen (1984). Moreover, individual films which make claims to accurately represent the real, historical world, also reveal uses of melodrama and visual excess, whilst the above three films owe a large part of their appeal to Rosi's use of the codes and conventions of realism.

Moreover, the historical events and political factions integrated into the discourse of a film such as Salvatore Giuliano may have been more or less familiar to the 1962 Italian audience, but a 1990s audience, whether Italian or not, will have to have recourse to other 'inferential journeys' or to genre conventions to attempt to make sense of the narrative. The fact that Rosi's films, particularly his more 'political' ones, provoked institutional and press debate can be attributed to authorial intention, but it can also be considered as a function of the production process, and one of the means by which a text engages with the context which produced it.

#### The displacement of the auteur

Structuralist critics in the late 1960s and the 1970s reacted against the idea of the all-powerful author - "d'été quelque peu vétuste de l'ancienne critique"<sup>6</sup> and turned their attention to the text itself and how it generated its meanings through systems of signs. After 1968 in particular, there was a conscious movement by left-wing critics to rethink the role of the artist in contemporary society.

At this subsequent turning of the critical tide, emphasis was placed on the text, rather than on its creator(s). Work in linguistics, psychology and ethnography informed film theory

and stressed the paramount role of the reader as a controlling source of coherence and intelligibility in the text. The goal of studying a text was to reveal the process by which a film created a reading of its meaning, hence the importance given to detailed analyses of films' *mise en scène* and montage. Structuralism therefore presupposes a communications model in that it identifies codes working in the text to generate preferred 'readings', which are then decoded (or not) by the spectator.

Structuralist criticism sees the text as the intersection of a multiplicity of codes; it allows the identification of an internal conflict of codes - independent of the author or critic - which generate meaning. Through distinction between langue and parole - parole being individual language use, what is actually said and written in Saussure's terms - and langue, which is the sum of utterances and the language system shared by a range of language users, and which, to Saussure remained static and inviolable, the presence of social determinations in language could be accounted for. Saussure himself, however, did not see them intervening at the stage of *parole*. The idea that the users of myth and language were not always conscious of the structures they were using also opened up areas of study in the text unrelated to the personally-held ideals of the author.

Structuralism has gone through many forms in film criticism and has been interpreted in subtly, or not so subtly, different ways which it is not the task of this work to analyse. Structuralist analyses have considerable advantages because they provide methods of analysing the play of signs,

codes and conventions at work in a text. However, in reducing the text to its underlying structure, no room is left to account for audience pleasure, or anything else apart from this structure. There is no room for analysis of the active relationship between screen and spectator, no room for different meanings to be taken from the text by different audiences, and no place for the social, ie, how society makes use of cinema. Cinestructuralism also has the weakness of failing to deal with the contributions and powerful appeal of the author, of cinematic genres, and of film language itself. Useful as structuralist theory has been in analysing texts, the problem of the context was still an area of difficulty. In addition, most writing on directors tends to commodify them so that the financial realities of filmmaking are obscured. Thus, although the Structuralist approach is fruitful in identifying the codes operating in Rosi's films, which narrative events are crucial - or cardinal functions, to narrative progression - and which reinforce or qualify narrative actions, the frames of reference which are being mobilized, and patterns of motifs and themes, it becomes more difficult to use when considering audience pleasure, differing audience response over time, the historical context, and authorial choices within the text. In Rosi's films, for example, some of his wide-angle long shots which display architectural volumes and privilege graphic patterning can be attributed to the operation of the semic or symbolic codes. Others lack narrative motivation and yet, because they recur so often and so insistently, must be considered significant. Moreover, it has been argued that their historical and



industrial context is so important to consideration of certain directors that they cannot be discussed in purely structuralist terms<sup>7</sup>. We will argue that Rosi is one of those directors.

### Authorship and art cinema

Subsequently critics have attempted to come to terms with both text, author and context, especially when defining art cinema. Steve Neale's historical approach<sup>8</sup> to the idea of authorship showed it to be an attempt by Europeans to counter US domination of the film industry in the immediate postwar period. He described how 'art cinema' evolved its own industrial and institutional forms, such as art house circuits of distribution and exhibition, and how critics were essential to the process of defining quality. 'Quality' and 'art' came to be associated with a stress on visual style, the suppression of action in the Hollywood sense, the emphasis on character rather than plot, and the interiorisation of dramatic conflict. For him the art film's marks of enunciation were signifiers of authorial voice. He analysed the different institutional practices in European countries which favour the continuation of art cinema. The author, therefore, whilst existing outside the fiction, still had a role inside the textual space as an element of performance, ambiguity or of excess - those moments of disturbance/threat, visual delight, excess of style or moments where everything is made clear.

Although generally hostile to the idea of authorial intention marking the text, David Bordwell<sup>9</sup> made an interesting and useful attempt to come to terms with the author within the



codes and conventions of art cinema. He also explored the industrial codes of art cinema production, stressing the importance of the art house cinema circuits, film festivals and State validation in defining this area of the industry. He characterised art cinema as dominated by codes of realism, authorship and ambiguity. Whereas the classic Hollywood film relies on cause and effect logic motivated by character (but character only developed to the level of generic appropriateness or compositional unity), Bordwell saw art cinema as more about introspection than action. One way of defining realism in art cinema terms would therefore be that of psychological realism with complex characters and a consequent dependence on psychological causation. Additionally he identified a certain factuality or documentary realism such as that found in neorealist films. Loosening of cause and effect logic in the 'art' film's narrative might result in an effect of *cinéma vérité*, or in a picaresque narrative.

For Bordwell the presence of the author is signalled by style - syuzhet-generated narrative schemata - which the critical industry helpfully identifies for the spectator. The puzzle of classical narrative - "who did it" - is replaced in art cinema by the puzzle of plot (not story) - "who is telling this story and why this way?". The audience first seeks resolution of ambiguities in the text by looking for realistic motivation for the problem, in character psychology or in the events of a plausible diegetic world, and when this is not available, seeks authorial motivation.

The art film distinguished itself from mainstream product by

inscribing the author in the institutional context and by the fact that authors signalled their presence in the narrative by these marks of enunciation, ie. the style, which became signifiers of an authorial voice.<sup>10</sup> I shall return later to the presence of an authorial voice in Rosi's films.

Francesco Rosi cannot be fitted neatly into these definitions of 'art' cinema. His cinema is within a realist tradition of European cinema which seeks to engage with contemporary society and, in depicting events, to seek to represent their true nature. We will return to this idea in Chapter 3. Rosi's films are also discussed as authored texts, critical writing and interviews identifying distinguishing marks of his style. Rosi's films are not, as we shall show, primarily interested in establishing psychological realism of characters, and those which engage with political and social issues are more concerned with clarity of argument than with ambiguity.

#### From 'art' to 'quality' cinema

Whilst Bordwell and Neale's articles were important in generating discussion of art cinema and the place within it of the European film director, their definitions have become increasingly problematic. Not only does it become impossible to fit the work of every art cinema director into their categories without expanding their criteria to the point where they become all-inclusive and therefore meaningless, but also international developments in the film industries have made the distinction between mainstream and art cinema less clear cut. The 'art' cinema institution in the 1950s and 1960s was dominated by 'auteurist' films, such as those of Antonioni,

Fellini, Truffaut, Godard, etc; but developed to encompass the exhibition of mainstream films from other countries in their original language. Cross-fertilization also took place, with mainstream, American filmmakers, for example, experimenting with 'art' and avant garde cinematic techniques, and European filmmakers reworking Hollywood genre conventions.

As we have mentioned, Francesco Rosi's films make consistent and deliberate use of all the codes and conventions of a realist mode of filmmaking. However, they are heavily plotted rather than relying on the creation of psychologically complex characters. In addition they use a range of generic conventions from popular cinema; the thriller and the detective story are consistent examples. Ambiguity results from the generic necessity of maintaining areas of enigma for the syuzhet or plot to unravel. Cues to the interpretation of the enigma are not ambiguous. Here Umberto Eco's notions of rhetorical and stylistic overcoding are useful:-

"Overcoded rules... tell the reader whether a given expression (be it a single term, a sentence, or an entire textual sequence) is used rhetorically. At this level the reader inserts the competence, allowing recognition of a metaphor or any other trope and avoiding naïve denotative interpretation of figures of speech. Among overcoded rules also rank genre rules... and other literary conventions."<sup>11</sup>

and we shall consider the genre conventions and rhetorical figures used to cue preferred interpretations in a later chapter. Rosi's films do conform to the definition of authorial presence as excess or that which is "random and inexplicable, that which remains ungovernable within a textual regime presided over by narrative."<sup>12</sup> I shall return to an analysis of disturbance and visual excess in Chapter 5.



Rosi's later films could be said to have more in common with a newly evolving film genre, rather than with 'art' cinema. The 1980s have seen the development of big budget films, made exclusively with co-production deals, directed by well-known directors (often associated with art cinema practice), but firmly directed at a mainstream, mass audience. Critics have neglected to explore this category, or to discuss the changes in narrative style and techniques that aiming at a mass audience have entailed in the work of individual directors. Rosi's films from Cristo si è fermato a Eboli onwards, Bertolucci's Novecento, The Last Emperor, The Sheltering Sky, Claude Berri's Jean de Florette and Manon des Sources, the Merchant/Ivory films, come into this category. Certain mainstream US films have in recent years been influenced by European cinematic codes and conventions and have more in common with the above genre, which I shall call the 'quality' genre, than with the formulaic likes of Terminator 2.

We can define 'quality' cinema as similar to 'art' cinema in its validation of the director as guarantor of originality in conceiving the project and of technical mastery of cinematic techniques. 'Quality' cinema differs in that it is an industrial category rather than a critical one, with all the implications of high production values, large budgets and wide distribution. Critics, for example, generally write about Rosi as an 'auteur' or belonging to the 'art' cinema tradition. His presence in the 'quality' sector, however, destines his films now to big budget production modes and a mass, international market.

It is ironic that industrial constraints - the need to

maximize selling opportunities of a variety of products besides the film itself, and the mass-appeal imperatives of commercial broadcasting - have resulted in the increased homogenization of prestige productions from both sides of the Atlantic. As Rossi suggests, commercial concerns have an effect on form:-

"... le regole della produzione rispondono a ferrei principi quali quelli enunciati recentemente dallo stesso Berlusconi: "girate in inglese, avendo presenti le esigenze del mercato internazionale e non progettate sequenze più lunghe di sette minuti, onde consentire l'inserimento armonico degli spots al momento della telediffusione."<sup>13</sup>

Chapter 1 will examine the context of the Italian media industries within which Rosi's career has to be considered, and will test the semiotic analysis of Giuseppe Perrella.<sup>14</sup>

### Neoformalism and the author

Recent reworkings of the Soviet theorists of the 1920s in the neo-formalist analyses of American critics such as David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson mark a shift from the structuralist emphasis on a text's work of denotation and connotation to a study of énonciation, the process of telling in the text. Here again the author is a problem subordinate to the process of linguistic activity.

Neoformalist critics return to a basic tenet of Russian Formalist criticism to refute the communications (sender-message-reader) model of artistic perception, arguing that the function of an aesthetic object is not practical, and that the purpose of criticism is to explain the realm of the art work and its relation to the world<sup>15</sup>.

Neoformalist critics see artworks as engaging the spectator at several levels of perception, emotion and cognition and



thereby changing our way of perceiving, feeling and reasoning. "Artworks achieve their renewing effects on our mental processes through an aesthetic play the Russian Formalists termed *defamiliarization*"<sup>16</sup>.

By concentrating on how films use existing codes and conventions, and generate their meanings through narrative structure and *mise en scène*, neo-formalists incorporate an active audience into the production of meaning. Meanings are generated through a variety of visual and verbal cues from which the spectator constructs hypotheses as to the nature of things, people and events. In formalist terms the *syuzhet* (plot) manipulates *fabula* (story) events so that information is withheld or inferred and this allows for a differentiated, as well as an active, audience which brings its own context to bear on cues and makes its own hypotheses.

Neoformalism is also a useful tool for analysing the cues of space and time, eg. offscreen space, deep focus, the 180 degree rule, treating them as *syuzhet*-created schemata which control stylistic schemata. Neo-formalist analyses are capable of describing the consistent narrational principles employed in historically defined groups of films, eg. defined by genre, school, movement, etc, and, in a synchronic approach, in describing the schemata available to a spectator at a given moment.

Neoformalists' stress on hypothesis-formation is a direct result of the move away from a communications model for the relation of director-to film-to audience. Bordwell, in his study of narration, is however, left with the problem of how the director's subjectivity is inscribed whilst also producing

and being produced by the spectator's subjectivity. In his attempt to come to terms with this, Bordwell examines, amongst others, the work of Benveniste. Benveniste's work originates in linguistics. It has interested film theoreticians, who have interpreted it often in contradictory ways<sup>11</sup>, perhaps because analogies with film are hard to find. One aspect of his system which has interested those working with film has been Benveniste's differentiation between the subject of the enounced and the subject of the enunciation. The subject of the enunciation is the speaking subject within the text; the subject of the enounced, the subject of speech, is identifiable by the subjective linguistic markers in what is spoken. The author may perceive of him or herself as the producer of the text; the subjective markers in the enounced are evidence of conscious and unconscious inscriptions of the author in the text.

Benveniste suggests that by retracing the marks of narration through 'shifters' (individual marks of enunciation, the "I" or concealed "I" of the narrative) the work of a subjectivity within the text is revealed. Bordwell quotes Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni to explore Benveniste's notions of the relationship of the speaker (author) to the product of the communicative act:-

"...the study of enunciation has become "the study of linguistic devices (shifters, modalizers, evaluative terms, etc.) by which the speaker leaves his mark upon the énoncé, inscribes himself into the message (implicitly or explicitly), and situates himself with respect to it."<sup>12</sup>

Enunciation therefore indicates an authorial voice. Different critics have identified different cinematic strategies which

might correspond to these subjective markers, for example the point of view shot (where the outline of the speaker's head and shoulder can be seen at one side of the frame and the camera 'looks', with the speaker, at the addressee, or where camera direction is cued by character gaze direction from the previous shot), camera movement, obtrusive editing.

Bordwell goes on to discuss these in terms of Benveniste's distinction between histoire and discours. Histoire is defined as the mode which omits strong enunciative marks, that is to say, it suppresses signs of an enunciating subject and of its production. Histoire has been considered the mode of the mainstream fiction film, where mise en scène and editing function to give the spectator the position from which to make the text most intelligible and evidence of narrating is, for the most part, suppressed. Discours on the other hand is "... every enunciation assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker the intention of influencing the hearer in some way."<sup>19</sup> The system of discours would therefore include first and second person pronouns, and deictics, "which depend for their meaning on the situation of enunciation (now, here, two years ago, etc)"<sup>20</sup>.

This system is with difficulty transferable to cinema. Very few narrative feature films use first person address. Documentary uses it as part of its exhortatory or persuasive address, but also generally manages to conceal its ideological underpinning at the same time. We will consider some use of deixis in Chapter 3. Neo-formalism still has problems with the author and tries to come to terms with this purely as paradigms of style, eg, art cinema narration which self-



consciously points to its own interventions.

A film which conceals its marks of enunciation tends to naturalise and render transparent its ideological premises. Most mainstream narrative films are considered to do this, although most films contain moments/sections where a subjectivity becomes apparent. Films influenced by the work of Brecht, avant garde and political films foreground enunciation.

In general, neoformalism approaches are extremely useful for the interpretation of art works such as the films of Francesco Rosi. As an 'art cinema' or 'quality' director, he has an interest in foregrounding his own artistic interventions within the texts. It will also be interesting to examine the "backgrounds" which the spectator needs to bring to the work in order to get the most from it, and the cues to the formation of hypotheses which are structured into the texts. Neoformalism would also seem to offer an approach to the understanding of the play of logic and emotion within the texts.

### Psychoanalytic theory

The question of pleasure which was inadequately theorised in structuralist critiques was central to writing on psychoanalysis and film in the '70s. The literature is now vast and this is not the place to survey it. As Graeme Turner has summarized:-

"Psychoanalytic theory has emphasized the importance of the 'look', the gaze of the audience. This is reflected in its references to the audience as 'the spectator'. The power of the individual's look is important within Freudian and post-Freudian theory since it is part of the individual's self-definition and relationship to his or her environment."<sup>21</sup>

Psychoanalytic theory has attempted to analyse the nature of audience identification with the character on the screen, most notably through Jacques Lacan's description of the 'mirror phase' of childhood development and its application as a source of audience pleasure in film. Much feminist film criticism has taken up Laura Mulvey's influential, 1975 article which uses psychoanalytic theory to indentify the mechanisms of patriarchy and to make political points.<sup>22</sup>

Mulvey's main argument is that male visual pleasure is the controlling pleasure in cinema and that it has two central forms - scopophilia, linked both to sexual attraction (voyeurism) and to narcissistic identification (the introjection of ideal .egos. These two contradictory, pleasurable structures interact with and overlay each other. Mulvey sees woman in classical Hollywood film as image and man as bearer of the look as the determining male gaze projects its phantasy onto a female figure which is styled accordingly. In western cinematic traditions, the female is looked at and displayed and her appearance is coded for strong visual and erotic impact. The male is active, the motor of the narrative; he represents dominant power because he bears the look of the spectator. The spectator identifies with the main, male, protagonist so the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of the erotic look, thus generating a satisfying sense of omnipotence - or pleasure. The male star's glamour does not make him the erotic object of the gaze but the representation of a more perfect alter ego. Mulvey calls for a cinema of "dialectics and passionate detachment" to destroy the spectator's



satisfaction, pleasure and privilege.

In order to compensate for the fundamentally ahistorical and apolitical nature of most psychoanalytical film theory, Kaya Silverman takes psychoanalytic notions of lack further by linking them to ideas of suture.<sup>23</sup>

Theoreticians of the idea of suture stress the lack, and the desire for knowledge, which the spectator experiences when he/she realizes that a full view of the objects of the camera has been denied by the suppression of a reverse shot. Critics have discussed the idea of suture almost entirely in terms of visual components<sup>24</sup> but we will discuss aural suture in a subsequent section. Oudart and Dayan's theory of suture is based on the shot/reverse shot. In the first shot the viewer discovers the frame, in his/her reading process, and is therefore made aware of what is not in frame. The spectator loses his/her pleasure in the image because he/she feels dispossessed by what he/she is prevented from seeing, by what he/she has not been authorized to see. In the second shot, the reverse field shot of the first, the "hole in the spectator's imaginary relationship with the filmic field... is 'sutured' by the shot of the character presented as the absent one's field".<sup>25</sup>

Oudart and Dayan contend that the system is intrinsically tyrannical and functions not merely to convey neutrally the ideology of the fictional level but is "built so as to mask the ideological origin and nature of cinematographic statements." Rothman argues that suture is a function of style rather than a system in itself, in that Oudart and Dayan's system is built on a 2-shot (view/viewer) figure,

which constitutes a complete cinematic statement, whereas Rothman shows that "the point of view shot is ordinarily... part of a three-shot (viewer/view/viewer) sequence"<sup>26</sup>. Rather than turning any film which depends on suturing into a system of bourgeois ideology, he shows that Vertov, for instance, uses the technique for his deconstruction of conventional narrative forms. Rothman contends that:-

"The point-of-view shot has significance within the film which arises in part from the identity of the character whose view it is, in part from the occasion of his act of viewing, and, in part from what is contained in the view itself"<sup>27</sup>

parallel to the determination of the meaning of utterances in the "real world". For Silverman, suture is always an ideological operation, "since it restores the viewer to his or her preordained subject-position and resecures existing power relations". Once again the text works to subordinate space to a particular, individual point of view, a perspective on the objects and action within the frame, thus concealing the ideological operation.

In Rosi's films, we shall show that the shot/reverse shot trope is frequently used within sequences and that its use can be attributed to several reasons, such as the need to vary visual material whilst large amounts of information are being conveyed by dialogue, and the visualization of conflict. The revelation of ideological operations consistently becomes the narrative drive of his films, through his use of the investigative form. A frequent stylistic device is in fact to show a character looking, and the following reverse shot to show what is being looked at, where the protagonist's facial expression and body language cues an ironic reading against

bourgeois ideology.

Psychoanalytic theory can be interesting in identifying how the recipient of the speech act or enunciation is addressed and situated by it. Cinema is, however, primarily a visual, rather than a verbal mode of communication. Psychoanalytic theory may help us to explore areas of lack in Rosi's cinema, such as the structured absence of the erotic, the marginalization of female characters, and the problem areas around the nature of masculinity, which are not the prime sites of narrative concern in the texts. This approach, however, can tend to reinforce the idea of the personality of the author as the controlling site of meanings in the texts and to limit interesting areas of exploration by reducing all the texts' concerns to the playing out of Oedipal dramas. In addition, psychoanalytic theory has no interest in how the text functions as an industrial product. This approach will not, therefore, be the focus of this investigation.

### Discourse analysis

Current poststructuralist discourse analysis lays emphasis on intertextuality - on the effects of films on other films, on meanings and effects resulting from relationships with other films and other cultural products. It examines the effects of ideology, economics and technology on cinema and seeks to discover the historical and discursive organization at the foundations of the text and which negotiates its relationship with its historical audience. With its preoccupation with the rhetoric of the text - the text's strategies of address to the spectator, it addresses the question of how we use the author-figure (fictional, constructed or actual) in our reading and



for our pleasure. Discourse analysis recognises the author as a crucial factor for consideration, especially where non-mainstream, alternative and independent cinema is concerned. It also takes account of the text's social and institutional context which, amongst other things, assigns copyright, legally and actually, to an author.

In our case, study of the discourses of this body of texts has enabled the recognition of consistencies, particularly in their stated agenda of political examination, which can be shown to identify a particular authorial style.

Between the idea of the spectator being positioned by the text to ignore the ideological process and the notion of audiences reading different meanings into a text lies Foucault's work on authorship. This arose from his concern with the relations among discourses, subjects and power. It indicates the death of the 'author' as creative source of the text, although he recognized that the name of the author was directly involved in relations of power in that it would guarantee a certain mode of reception distinct from that accorded to non-authored texts.<sup>28</sup>

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spectator, it addresses the question of how we use the author-figure (fictional, constructed or actual) in our reading and for our pleasure.

The author is identified as a "discursive subject", that is as identifiable as a 'speaker' within the text through the network of different discourses by which the text is constituted and from the interaction of discourses rather than by virtue of a single point of view, ie. by the historical manipulation of a particular set or system of codes and conventions/modes of writing in circulation at a particular time. Study of discourses of a text or body of texts enables the recognition of continuation and consistencies which can be shown as identifying a particular authorial style. In this way, discourse analysis provides an attractive option for the examination of texts, such as those of the author, 'Francesco Rosi', which have a stated agenda of political examination. Lapsley and Westlake, however, suggest that it "offered little in the way of explanation for the existence of the author-function, of why anonymity needed to be avoided"<sup>29</sup>. This study will attempt to come to terms with this question through consideration of the industrial context of Rosi's work.

## 2. Previous studies of Rosi's films

The cinema of Francesco Rosi has been the subject of an enormous number of articles - in Italian, French, Spanish, German, English and other languages - and several full length studies.

Early evaluations, such as that of Giuseppe Ferrara in 1965 and Nino Ferrero in 1972, discussed Rosi as an 'auteur' inheriting the mantle of neorealism. Giuseppe Ferrara in

particular attributes a Gramscian agenda to the early neorealist filmmakers, although Gramsci's work did not begin to be published in accessible form until 1947, and stresses their use of realism in the service of revealing social and humanistic 'truths'. Later critics (notably the 1974 10th Pesaro Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema) teased out the sequence of publication of Gramsci's work and indicated its influence on films from the early 1950s. It also returned to the texts themselves to show the use of other cinematographic strategies, such as melodrama, and the presence of emotion and humour. By his concern to fit Rosi into the pigeonhole of serious, realist, director, Ferrara is able to dismiss Rosi's 'apprenticeship' as a series of "compromessi":-

"... lavorare cioè, a film che gli davano scarse soddisfazioni, ma che gli permettevano di vivere e non lo impegnavano su un piano profondo".<sup>30</sup>

although there is some inkling that Rosi might have taken on the Kean project (where Vittorio Gassman had directorial credit, but where Rosi in fact was charged with the task of making sure that the end result was a film, rather than filmed theatre) in order to prove his worth to the producer, Franco Cristaldi. Ferrara's approach is to type-cast Rosi as the inheritor of neorealism, a realist director battling with the authorities to make his serious films. By concentrating on Rosi's "autorità morale" and his "volontà estetico-politico", it allows no space to consider the fantasy or affective strategies of Rosi's films. Nino Ferrero's much shorter book takes a schematic look of each of Rosi's films, considering them as a prolongation of a neorealist agenda. A study of Rosi's negotiations within Italian cinema has no place in

either of these books.

Tullio Kezich's 1961 account of the making of Salvatore Giuliano<sup>31</sup> devotes a large amount of space to Rosi's use of his sources in the transcripts of the Viterbo trial of Gaspare Pisciotta and of parliamentary debates. It is extremely interesting for the light it sheds on Rosi's working methods, but we wish to go beyond Kezich's auteurist project to examine how meaning is organized within the texts.

By the mid-1970s the events of 1968 and their aftermath necessitated a re-thinking of the role of the left-wing intellectual and how cinema might be made politically. A structuralist emphasis on the film texts was, however, not reflected in the books of Sandro Zambetti, Michel Ciment (and its second edition in 1987) and Jean Gili. All published in 1976, they have in common the identification and consideration of political themes in Rosi's films.

Michel Ciment's book moves from identification of Rosi's main thematic concerns - power, death, the South - to consideration of Rosi's personal and intellectual formation and the cultural heritage of neorealism visible in his work. He showed how Rosi used his sources in the screenplays of Salvatore Giuliano, Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano, and used extensive interviews to explore authorial intentions. The second edition incorporates later interviews and parts of articles from Positif, although without changing the fundamental auteurist line. Rosi's later films, with their preoccupation with memory and the rural, are seen as still consistent with a critical realist agenda.

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 we will see how this work on



sources is an extension of the numerous articles in newspapers and journals whose purpose is to validate and authenticate the labour of the director as author of the film.

Gili similarly stressed the development of the expression of political themes, through exploring the stages in the creative and practical genesis of each film, but interestingly widened his investigation to include the testimony of Rosi's collaborators. The type of questions asked of Raffaele La Capria, Tonino Guerra, Enzo Provenzale, Pasqualino De Santis and Gian Maria Volonté were obviously designed to elicit information about their personal and professional relationship to Rosi, and the extent to which they had professional autonomy in the production process. These testimonies - and it is significant that the appendix is entitled, "Témoignages des collaborateurs" - bear witness to Rosi's control of the creative and production process. Tonino Guerra's testimony gives the flavour of the thesis which is thereby validated:-

"C'est une chose incroyable que de voir où Rosi va chercher les matériaux, les documents dont il a besoin pour préparer ses films, de le voir ensuite les transformer, les organiser lorsqu'il a réussi à se faire une idée précise du film. Comme c'est un grand metteur en scène, il parvient à transformer ces matériaux vraiment diaboliques et à en faire des espèces de fables... Il part d'une réalité ... qu'il va dénicher jusque dans les coins des bureaux des commissariats, auprès de je ne sais quelles personnalités politiques. Puis, il tourne, il tourne, et il réussit, dans les images, à dilater cette réalité, à lui donner une présentation telle que l'on sent le détachement vis-à-vis de la fable."<sup>32</sup>

The interview works to reinforce a view of Rosi as author of a film, and of the hard work involved in being an author. There is, however, in Gili's study no consideration of how the filmmaker negotiates a place within the structures of Italian



cinema, and very little on the use of non-realist cinematographic strategies.

Rosi's cultural formation in neorealism, and his personal biography were also of interest to Alessandro Zambetti. He too traced the development of political theses from film to film, and how they were interpreted through narrative progression and mise en scène. Everything in Rosi's early career and personal history is shown to influence his choice and treatment of themes and to give his career a consistency. Those films which are inconsistent, such as C'era una volta, are considered to be unsuccessful.

All, therefore, wrote about Francesco Rosi as the controlling intelligence in the production of meanings in the films. Our study considers that this approach then raises the fundamental question of how a director manages, if at all, to achieve this control.

There is additionally a study of Rosi, published in Moscow in 1977 by Elizavetta A Viktorova. Viktorova's work is not interested in Rosi as a historical person, but merely as the nexus of socio-historical forces which enables him to engage with social reality and to make a critique of it. She ignores all of Rosi's affective strategies<sup>33</sup>, and identifies his use of the investigative format with a strategy to unmask the class struggle. There is no consideration of how an artist might be able to explore these themes within the capitalist framework of film production, very little consideration of what is purely cinematographic rather than reinforcing a theme, and little interest in the less overtly political films. We propose to address these issues.

The passage to a less denunciatory and more lyrical mode of filmmaking with Cristo si è fermato a Eboli caused some critical problems - it has been a recurring reproach, after 1976, that Rosi's films lack the political rigour of his more uncompromising texts of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>34</sup> The book published by Koschnitzki et al in 1982 attempts to come to terms with changes in mood, mixing interviews and reviews of individual films to show the evolution of Rosi's depiction of power and the South. As befits a book published after 1968, they consider how Rosi, as left-wing artist, has incorporated the ideas of Gramsci and Brecht into the service of his stated political concerns. They are able to come to terms with the more lyrical ethos of the films from Eboli onwards by reference to Rosi's claims to use emotional involvement in the service of political persuasion, marking a move to a poetics of powerlessness from an analytical poetics of power.<sup>35</sup> We are also interested in the evolution of Rosi's themes, but will examine them in terms of cinematic language and in terms of the different production contexts of the films.

More recently, Linda Coremans' 1990 study concentrates on an exhaustive analysis of both Il contesto and Cadaveri eccellenti in order to propose a semiotic model for the analysis of film adaptations of literary texts. Through scrupulous analysis of the mise en scène of the film, of the filmic techniques used, the actions depicted, and the play of semantic structures and codes, she shows how Rosi filleted the basic structure of Sciascia's book and constructed his own reflection on contemporary Italy, encompassing his perennial concerns with power, death, the South. Her interest in his

use of conventions for the creation of filmic space, where the denotative and the connotative are allowed full play, are developed in the subsequent issue of the Revue Belge du Cinéma<sup>36</sup>. Here "Rosi" functions as one code amongst many operating within the text. In her interest in the dialectical relationships between the text and the

"... "intertexte": ses textes (films) se situent clairement dans l'histoire et la société, considérées elles-mêmes comme textes réécrits par le cinéaste ou transformés en un tout dans l'espace textuel d'un film spécifique. Ses films ne se présentent jamais comme reflet d'une réalité (ou idéologie) donnée, mais comme le résultat d'une interaction entre texte et récepteur, entre texte et histoire."<sup>37</sup>

she concentrates primarily on those films which can be identified as overtly 'political'. The 'less-typical', 'less-consistent' films, are of little interest. Once again, within the parameters of a semiotic analysis, there is no room for consideration of the role of the film industry.

These critical studies have been valuable in suggesting approaches to Rosi's work, but a study of the films themselves has raised many, unanswered questions.

### 3. Questions raised by a study of Rosi's work

Several questions suggest themselves for consideration.

Firstly, we wish to examine how Rosi, as director, fits into the Italian film industry, and whether industry structures limit the creative options available. In considering a director as an 'auteur', identifying a career pattern and a consistent career profile is of interest, in order to make some judgement as to whether career decisions were purely reactive, or the result of a planned progression towards the 'quality' end of the market. The question of how a director



like Rosi negotiates a creative space for himself within the current television duopoly also suggests itself.

The usual definition of Rosi as a politically committed realist director, raises the question of what his realist strategies actually consist of and how they might be reconciled with the visual excess present in his films. Some critics have considered those films which do not seek to explore the reasons behind political events, such as C'era una volta, Carmen, Cronaca di una morte annunciata and, to some extent, Il momento della verità and Tre fratelli, as aberrant within his oeuvre<sup>38</sup>. Since they occupy one third of Rosi's output, it is important to analyse the differing ideological positions displayed by the films and the different levels of engagement with contemporary society.

In considering Francesco Rosi as an 'auteur', we are particularly interested in identifying what marks of subjectivity there are in the texts, and how Rosi might signal his own presence as creative source in the films.

#### 4. Solutions of Methodology this work proposes

It is tempting to consider Rosi as the author of his films but I intend to make a distinction between Rosi, the subject of the enounced (the utterance), and Rosi who considers himself the producer of the text. The source of the temptation to consider him as an 'auteur' would seem to lie in the practices of the Italian film industry in which his 'worth', where getting production finance is concerned, is assessed statistically on the basis that the films he 'authors' generally generated certain box office returns, and in the fact that, by all accounts he appears to have a considerable



amount of directorial control over the script, photography, performances, mise en scène and editing of 'his' films.

### The context of the Italian film industry

In considering the problem of Rosi the director as author of his films, our first aim is to examine his career in the context of the Italian film and media industries. We will examine how the institutional structures of the industry define the director, how these structures operate and to what extent they can be used by a director such as Rosi. We will also investigate the presence of other factors in the political economy of the Italian film industry, and international media interests, which might influence the type of films which can be made - or not made.

It was decided to limit this part of the study to the industry's own view of itself by analysing the Italian trade papers, all of which publish slightly different statistical material. Giornale dello Spettacolo (Borsa film) gives box office returns for all films released on the prima visione circuit in the città capozona of Rome, Milan, Turin, Genoa, Padua, Bologna, Florence, Naples, Bari, Catania, Cagliari, Ancona, Palermo, Venice, Trieste and Messina. Cinema d'Oggi gives statistics on the popularity of particular types and genres of film, plot synopses and basic details of the production personnel, but only for Italian films. The cinematic season runs from 1 September to 31 August. The annual Lo spettacolo in Italia, published by SIAE, reports on spending on all forms of entertainment in Italy, from circuses to opera. In addition, the Catalogo Bolaffi del Cinema Italiano published useful lists of films, by year, genre,

production credits and box office returns. After this ceased publication, an approximation of the Italian feature film market and the distribution pattern of individual films was obtained by melding together material from Giornale dello Spettacolo and Cinema d'oggi.

A large number of reviews and articles were also gathered together from newspapers and journals in order to complement the industry view by analysing its interaction with the critical apparatus.

Rosi's intentions, stated mainly in interviews given at the time of a film's release, are well documented:-

"Io la mia scelta l'ho fatta: non voglio far saltare tutto e voglio rispettare la vita, la democrazia e la libertà, consapevole come sono sempre stato e come ho sempre dimostrato attraverso i miei film, di vedere sì nella classe dominante la radice della illegalità, della violenza, del patto violato; ma nello stesso tempo di dover pretendere dai 'dominati' e soprattutto dalle sinistre, unità di sforzi, lucidità di strategie e visione del reale nel processo di attuazione dell'aspirazione a rifondare lo Stato"<sup>39</sup>

We will consider the interaction between authorial intention as expressed in other media and the films' reception.

The aim of this part of the study has been to identify the norms of the market against which any director's career must be judged.

### Textual analysis

Secondly, examination of the organization of the texts themselves will aim to identify how preferred meanings are constructed, and what marks of enunciation exist in the texts which might be attributed to a particular "Rosi" style.

The films were examined on a moviola machine or on video and transcriptions made of their screenplay. Notes were made of

cuts, the content of the frame at each cut, camera movements and the soundtrack. Such notes, of course, already represent a judgemental process, but they do allow the syntagmatic chain of the films to be broken down into sequences and scenes. On the basis of this textual analysis, paradigmatic choices can be identified, patterns of mise en scène and editing, rhetorical devices and ways of building narrative

This methodology engenders an enormous amount of material which provides a wide base for comparison.

Using a neoformalist approach, we will analyse the different functions at work in the texts. Compositional motivations ("the inclusion of any device necessary for the construction of narrative causality"<sup>40</sup>), realistic, transtextual (the appeal to the conventions of other artworks) and artistic motivations (such as patterns of mise en scène, camera movement, sonic motifs which exceed their contribution to meaning and attract attention) will be studied in order to see how the cultural context impinges on Rosi's cinema. In analysing how a text signals itself as authored, several questions suggest themselves - the knowledgeability of the narration, its communicativeness and self-consciousness; the operation of conflicts between value systems and how they are represented; what narrative choices are made to represent different points of view in the fictional world.

An examination of the political agenda of Rosi's films would include a study of how the film texts work to cue the viewer to make a series of interpretative choices involving the working through of ideological struggle between different discourses. How narratives function to persuade and how

different meanings might be taken up by the viewer must also be addressed.

Given that these films have the stated intention of relating to and commenting on the world outside the text, the question then arises of how the texts structure references to the 'real world'. In considering the ontological claims of the films, we have chosen to use a combination of structuralist and neo-formalist tools of analysis. We have not felt the psychoanalytic approach to be the most appropriate approach for a study of ideology in film. Psychoanalytical theory can tend to reinforce the idea of the personality of the author as the controlling site of meanings in the texts. There are also, as Graeme Turner has pointed out,<sup>41</sup>

"... many other social and cultural pleasures which are implicated in the audience's decision to see a film and in what they do with the film when they see it."

Moreover, it is tempting to agree with Bordwell:-

"While I do not deny the usefulness of psychoanalytic approaches to the spectator, I see no reason to claim for the unconscious any activities which can be explained on other grounds."<sup>42</sup>

#### Use of interview material

Several interviews were conducted as part of this study. These will be found in Appendices One, Two and Three. These are considered, in a similar way to those of other critics, as an essential constituent of the 'secondary text' surrounding the films. They have been used for the light they can shed on creative choices and aims, and also as an index of how Rosi constructs and presents himself. They will, in all cases, be tested against the texts themselves.

In using other published interviews with Francesco Rosi, and



in transcribing our own interviews with him, two things became clear. Firstly that it is possible to discern a process of narrativization taking place from interview to interview. That is, that Rosi can be observed working out a 'line' to justify his creative choices, or to respond to criticism or enquiry post facto. It is very difficult to get him to deviate from his own narrative and he will often react defensively to questions that have not been asked, but the shadow of whose presence has been evoked by a particular line of enquiry.

Secondly, analysis of his speech patterns reveal a greater stress on the first person pronoun than is the norm in spoken Italian. Sentences consistently start with "Io" to a noticeable degree, thus foregrounding himself as important, as the subject of what is being discussed.

Interviews will be examined as strategies for establishing himself as an author, and for maintaining himself in that position.

## 5. Conclusion

Using the approach of jointly examining industrial as well as textual structures, this investigation of Rosi's work and how he might be constructed theoretically as author will take the following form.

Chapter 1 analyses the work of Francesco Rosi in the context of the Italian film industry, the role the industry itself assigns to the 'author' and the role that industry structures play in the exercise of 'authorship'. The importance of some international developments and the possibility of interaction with individual creative decisions will be examined.

Chapter 2 aims to explore the main narrative thrusts of Rosi's films. Brief synopses of each film will lead to examination of the narrative forms selected as appropriate to the study of particular themes, political institutions and power relations. Chapter 3 will examine the question of the assertion of textual authority. Rosi's uses of conventions of realist cinema will be explored. The ontological claims of the films, and markers within the texts which refer to the extra-diegetic world will be of particular interest. Rhetorical patterns and their suggested force will be studied as will strategies to authenticate an authorial viewpoint.

Chapter 4 will examine Rosi's claims to be a political director by analysing his treatment of institutions, historical figures, contemporary events and the world of politics, and by assessing the ideological positions displayed. Stylistic choices and rhetorical devices connecting the intra-diegetic worlds to a historical context will be studied.

Chapter 5 further explores the stylistic implications of the construction of space in Rosi's films, both as a site for political comment and for authorial display. How the codes of melodrama are expressed visually and used to move narrative attention from the personal to the political will also be addressed.

Finally, the Conclusion reconsiders this investigation as a model for an approach to the problem of the film director as author. We will also suggest profitable areas of research following this study.

Four interviews with Francesco Rosi were conducted during this

research project, three of which were recorded and are transcribed as Appendix One, Appendix Two and Appendix Three. It is tempting to assume that film directors tell the truth when interviewed but, all too often, interviews reflect merely a post-facto mediation of choices made, or the fact that they are part of the post-production process of a film. As such, however, they are similarly part of the societal reality which produced the primary texts. They are appended for their interest as secondary texts.

Appendix Four gathers together work on Rosi's collaborators and attempts to assess their contribution.

Lapsley and Westlake in their chapter outlining the historical development of theories of authorship have concluded that the quest for the author remains as urgent a concern as ever, witness the persistent authorial discourse from initial film publicity to critical and academic reception. Audiences crave the satisfaction of knowing "who is speaking and to whom?"<sup>43</sup> This then is perhaps the source of our fascination with the work of Francesco Rosi which was aroused initially by the pleasure generated by the texts and by a desire to explore the source of that pleasure.

1. NICHOLS, BILL (Ed): Movies and Methods, Vol. I. (University of California Press, Los Angeles & Berkeley, 1976) page 221.
2. BAZIN, ANDRÉ: "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism", in What is Cinema? Vol II (University of California, Berkeley, 1971) page 26.
3. Bazin: "In Defense of Rossellini", op.cit, page 97.
4. CIMENT, MICHEL, FOFI, GOFFREDO & GOBETTI, PAOLO: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Positif, 69, May 1965, page 5.



5. Rosi has consistently stressed his personal commitment to realist cinema - "La lezione di Visconti ha significato per me metodo e stile. Metodo, nello stabilire un contatto con la realtà senza perdere di vista il rispetto che le si deve anche nella tormentata ricerca della verità; stile, in quanto richiamo continuo alla globalità di una struttura narrativa e ideologica e di una concezione poetica che dell'immediatezza della vita reale conservino la vitalità e non solo la casualità." (FERRERO, ADELIO (Ed): Visconti: il cinema, Comune di Modena, Modena, 1977, page 146). He equally insists on his own role in mediating reality - "Ora anche se il mio modo di girare è stilisticamente apparentabile con il documentario, io invece pretendo di fare dei film, cioè di raccontare delle storie, di esprimere un mio personale punto di vista e non di registrare una realtà così com'è." (LUPO, LODOLETTA (Ed): "Un'immagine della Spagna: colloquio con Francesco Rosi", Bianco e Nero, 4, April 1965, page 27), even to the extent of modifying scenographic space so as to closely control the depiction of reality (see my interview of 28 July 1985 in Appendix One). The emphasis on personal effort, of painful process, on personal intervention is noticeable, and reflects a common construction of the work of the creative person.
4. Roland Barthes hoped to reduce the author to the status of text in equality with any other; "... il suffira de renoncer à faire de sa personne le sujet, la butée, l'origine, l'autorité, le Père, d'où dériverait son oeuvre, par une voie d'expression; il suffira de se considérer lui-même comme un être de papier et sa vie comme une bio-graphie ... une écriture sans référent, matière d'une connexion, et non d'une filiation: l'entreprise critique ... consistera alors à retourner la figure documentaire de l'auteur en figure romanesque, irrépérable, irresponsable, prise dans le pluriel de son propre texte...". BARTHES, ROLAND: S/Z (Éditions du Seuil, 1970, p 217).
7. COOK, PAM: The Cinema Book (BFI, London, 1985) pp 168-169.
8. NEALE, STEVE: "Art Cinema as Institution", Screen, vol. 22, no 1, Spring 1981, pp 11-39.
9. BORDWELL, DAVID: "The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice", Film Criticism, v.4, no.1, Fall 1979.
8. Bordwell, page 59.
11. ECO, UMBERTO: The Role of the Reader (Hutchinson Education, London, 1987), page 18. This notion will provide a useful basis to later discussion of what he calls the presupposed 'competenza ideologica' of the reader of the text, and how 'la competenza ideologica del lettore (prevista o meno che sia dal testo) interviene

nei processi di attualizzazione dei livelli semantici più profondi, in particolare quelli considerati strutture attanziali e strutture ideologiche.' (Lector in Fabula, 2nd edition, Tascabili Bompiani, Milan, 1986, page 84). By identifying all iconological entities as the result of overcoding, and courtesy formulas as coming from an overcoded everyday language (A Theory of Semiotics, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1979, page 134) Eco opens the way to profitable discussion of some of Rosi's visual strategies and to his depiction of social rituals.

12. NICHOLS, BILL: Representing Reality (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991) page 141.
13. ROSSI, UMBERTO: "Cinema: da fenomeno di massa a fattore d'élite", Cinemasessanta, 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 4.
14. PERRELLA, GIUSEPPE: L'Economico e il semiotico del cinema italiano (Theorema Edizioni, Rome, 1981).
15. See BORDWELL, DAVID: Narration in the Fiction Film, (Methuen, London, 1985) chapter 4; and Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1991) chapter 11. Also THOMPSON, KRISTIN: Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible: a Neoformalist Analysis (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981) chapter 1; and Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988) chapter 1.
16. Thompson: Breaking the Glass Armor, page 10.
17. CULLER, JONATHAN: Structuralist Poetics (RKP, LONDON, 1975) pp 197-200.
18. KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, CATHERINE: L'énonciation: De la subjectivité dans le langage, (Colin, Paris, 1980, page 32) quoted in David Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film (Methuen, London, 1985) page 21.
19. BENVENISTE, EMILE: "Structure des relations de personne dans le verbe", in Problèmes de linguistique générale, (Gallimard, Paris, 1966) page 239, quoted by Bordwell in Narration in the Fiction Film, page 21.
20. Culler, page 197.
21. TURNER, GRAEME: Film as Social Practice, Routledge, London, 1988, page 113.
22. MULVEY, LAURA: "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in Screen vol 16, no 3, Autumn 1975.
23. SILVERMAN, KAYA: The Acoustic Mirror, Indiana UP, Bloomington, 1988, pp 10 and 200.



24. See Stephen Heath's chapter "On Suture" in Questions of Cinema, (Macmillan, London, 1981) pp 76-109; and William Rothman's chapter, "Against the system of suture" in Bill Nichols (Ed) Movies and Methods, (University of California Press, Berkeley & London, 1976) pp 452-9.
25. DAYAN, DANIEL: "The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema", in Bill Nichols (Ed): Movies and Methods (University of California Press, Berkeley & London, 1976) page 449.
26. Rothman, page 455.
27. Rothman, page 459.
28. FOUCAULT, MICHEL: "What is an author" in Screen, vol. 20, Spring 1979, page 28.
29. LAPSLEY, ROBERT & WESTLAKE, MICHAEL: Film Theory: an Introduction (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988) page 127.
30. FERRARA, GIUSEPPE: Francesco Rosi (Canesi, Rome, 1965) page 47.
31. KEZICH, TULLIO: Salvatore Giuliano (Edizioni FM, Rome, 1961) pp 77-123.
32. GILI, JEAN: Francesco Rosi: Cinéma et Pouvoir (Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1976) page 197.
33. "Rosi does not demand sympathy and empathy or expect involvement. He does the opposite and distances the audience in order that they understand the causes of events." VIKTOROVA, ELIZAVETTA A: Franchesko Rozi (Iskusstvo Press, Moscow, 1977) page 56.
34. In fact Rosi seems to be one of those unfortunate filmmakers whose current film is constantly lamented as not being as good/politically correct/hard-hitting as his last one. He is often reproached for moving on to new themes and exploring variations on previous preoccupations.
35. KOSCHNITZKI, RUEDIGER, SCHUETTE, WOLFGANG, SEILER, ALEXANDER J & WITTE, KARSTEN: Francesco Rosi (Reihe Film 28, Karl Hanser Verlag, Munich, 1982) pp 51-52.
36. COREMANS, LINDA: "Francesco Rosi: un cinéaste de la modernité", Revue Belge du Cinéma, 21, Winter 87/88.
37. Coremans, page 37.
38. Amongst many reviews, we would signal the following as giving the flavour of critical unease with these films. Braucourt wondered how Rosi could have fallen so low as to film C'era una volta "comme un conte de fées pour lectrices de la presse de coeur, avec force



sentimentaliste et dénouement fleur bleue" (BRAUCOURT, GUY: "Les sorcières, La Belle et le Cavalier", Cinéma 68, 131, December 1968, page 126). Porro reproached Rosi for evading analysis of the Italy of mafia, camorra and terrorism in favour of style and professionalism with Carmen (PORRO, MAURIZIO: "La Carmen di Rosi al momento della verità", Corriere della Sera, 3.8.83). Many critics found the structure of Cronaca di una morte annunciata unbalanced, preferring cliché and emotion to a rigorous analysis of Latin American culture, one even going so far as to liken it to a telenovela (COLOMBO, FRANCO C: Untitled review, L'Eco di Bergamo, 13.5.87). Some expected Rosi to continue to develop from film to film as a director committed to examining social inequalities. Il momento della verità was not considered totally useless in this respect, "... ciò non toglie che possa lasciare la bocca un po' amara a chi si aspettava un altro deciso passo in avanti nella direzione coraggiosamente presa con Salvatore Giuliano e Le mani sulla città, una strada che ha ancora molto da far scoprire e che Rosi è in grado di percorrere come nessun altro." (ZAMBETTI, SANDRO: "Il momento della verità di Francesco Rosi", Cineforum, 45, May 1965, page 379). Tre fratelli was generally considered to be a serious film, but to show that Rosi was moving from "un interesse prevalente per la politica a quello per l'etica" (FOFI, GOFFREDO: "Ancora su "Tre fratelli", Il Manifesto, 29.4.81).

39. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Cara Rossana, hai sbagliato tutto", Il Manifesto, 25.3.1981.
40. Thompson, Breaking the Glass Armor pp 16-46.
41. Turner, page 120.
42. Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film, page 30. Bordwell posits a much more active viewer than psychoanalytic film theory allows.
43. Lapsley and Westlake, chapter 4, pp 127-8.

## CHAPTER 1

### FRANCESCO ROSI IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ITALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Federico Fellini claimed that the crisis of which the Italian cinema has complained has, in fact, lasted more than 30 years, that is, as long as his own career - and that of his contemporary, Francesco Rosi. The first task of this study, therefore, is to look at the film industry, at the context within which Francesco Rosi has operated since 1948 in order to assess his position as a director within the film industry and how he has been able to survive in the mainstream.

We will look particularly at how the film industry treats the author, what options are available to the authored film, how Rosi has used the system to his own advantage and to what extent he is now imprisoned by the very structures which have permitted him to forge a career.

#### PART 1: How the Italian film industry works

##### Defining the parameters

Mainstream feature films are extremely costly to produce; even small productions involve considerable financial investment and a significant number of creative and service personnel. Even an industry as notoriously Byzantine as the Italian has had to evolve, in the historic absence of detailed accounting, mechanisms for the assessment of the success of its productions. Since the immediate postwar period these have taken the form of detailed statistical records of the box office performance of individual films, genres, etc. Our aim in examining these is to assess the options open to a filmmaker in making career decisions, that is, in planning the production of a film. We will assess how successful Rosi's



films have been, and the industrial context at points where he has had to negotiate projects.

### Structuring information about financial success

Unlike Bordwell, Giuseppe Perrella<sup>1</sup> has ignored cinematic style, and concentrated on defining the structures of the Italian film industry which influence the final product. The Italian film industry has, until recently, not had to present audited company accounts but, on the other hand, detailed returns exist of box office receipts. There are also complicated formulae for financing film production, and for claiming additional State finance (the 'Article 28' finance - see page 57) if the product is retrospectively designated as 'quality' on the basis of its cultural or artistic impact, or of the contribution of its creative or technical personnel. Since cinema is such a heavily geared industry, production involves high levels of risk finance. The industry has therefore evolved its complex gathering of statistics to help give some indication of possible success, and thus lessen the risk. Statistics are compiled by AGIS (Associazione Generale dello Spettacolo) and published in the weekly trade paper, Giornale dello Spettacolo; ANICA (Associazione Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche e Audiovisive) published in the fortnightly trade paper, Cinema d'oggi; and the SIAE (Società Italiana Autori Editori) yearly statistical volume, Lo Spettacolo in Italia. The latter provides detailed statistics on all forms of entertainment in Italy, from opera to sport and circuses. Since the early 1970s a minor industry has grown up to provide statistics each Monday of weekend box office takings; these statistics were accorded increasing



weight in the 1980s as competition from television became more serious. Nazional Controlcine provides an 'instant' photograph of trends, but such methods do not favour films which are 'sleepers', slow to attract audiences but which gather momentum in popular appeal by word of mouth for example.<sup>2</sup> How Francesco Rosi might be categorized by these statistics will be the focus of our attention.

Although very detailed statistics are still kept which chart the progress of a film in various sectors of the film market, the whole system has since the mid-1980s been overtaken by developments in other sectors of the audio-visual industries. The majority of returns on a film's production will not nowadays be received from film distribution, but from broadcasting co-production pre-sales, videocassette deals and sponsorship. These are very much more difficult to assess. Producers and distributors of videocassettes have an umbrella organization, Univideo, which now conducts six-monthly surveys into its market. Italy was, however, slow to develop a VCR market and, although we shall see that it is now large enough to be a significant force in the media industry, it had to reach a certain stage of development, and wealth, before statistics started to be gathered in a coherent way. In 1992 ANICA bemoaned the lack of data on VCR use, and has now carried out a joint survey into this in association with Univideo.<sup>3</sup>

Perrella suggests that the relative and prolonged stability of Italian society and the film industry have generated various standard institutional practices whose aim is to maximise effort and investment. Tailoring products to particular

markets is one standard practice; repetition of forms is another. A film is easier to market if it belongs to a standard genre which is released in a standard way, in particular cinemas at particular times of the year. The danger of very original work is that it is not repeatable; the effort involved in its publicity campaign or in its shooting does not easily form part of the repertoire of institutional practices. As we shall see, one way of overcoming this disadvantage is to categorize and market the film by director - a 'Fellini film' or 'the latest Rosi' having definable characteristics.

Perrella identifies six functions of the production process which provide indications of the investment risk involved. He calls these the author-function, direction-function, source of subject, star-function of the cast, genres/filoni and the distribution dimension. The author-function is considered to be a system of valorising authors and their influence on the public on the basis of the box office returns of their previous films. Producers and distributors insist on this criterion of value. The author-function is not necessarily expressed by a particular personality as, in some genres (such as porno cinema) the author is anonymous, but is more the guarantee of a certain sort of product. At the upper levels of standard cinematic practice:-

"... hanno cercato prevalentemente di integrare l'autore nel processo di produzione complessivo non tanto come soggettività creatrice, quanto come lavoro, come funzione specifica all'interno di una organizzazione-divisione del lavoro, come professionista specializzato e socialmente responsabilizzato."

Perrella claims, for example, that a film can be a success if

the star-function is poor (ie. unknown actors) but offset by good distribution and the significant presence of the author, ie. an auteurist, or 'art' film of the 1950s or early 1960s. The author-function is therefore both a legal definition<sup>5</sup> and an institutional necessity used by critics to explain the film in terms of its modes of articulation. Perrella defines it as linked to economic and semiotic structures and imposing a stylistic unity but "più che unità stilistica è garanzia di un nome immediatamente associato a forme standard stereotipate da riprodurre"<sup>6</sup>.

To make a film, the author has to negotiate and interact with institutional practices. The direction-function is therefore that of the professional roles involved in the process of production. These can include one or any combination of the producer, or the director combined with screenwriter(s), designers etc, but the idea is that the direction-function takes the form of a recognizable entity which can be exploited and reproduced (if successful) commercially. The structures which Perrella identifies have changed in relative importance over the years and one of the aims of this chapter is to indicate how some of these changes have influenced the product.

By Perrella defines as economic structures the traditional division of the film industry into three sectors -production, distribution and exhibition. These can be called internal structures.

External structures affecting the industry consist of State intervention at the levels of finance or legislation; competition from outside Italy for control of the home market





(particularly by the US majors); and the transnational influence of new technological developments. It must now also include European Community directives. The cinema industry does not, of course, operate in a vacuum and we must also take into account at each stage its interaction with other cultural industries and other media.

Here John Fiske's work on television series is useful in analysing the socio-cultural patterns which relate to the production of particular media texts.<sup>7</sup> Fiske distinguishes between the primary text (the individual television programme, or series, or film), secondary texts, such as studio publicity, journalistic features, or criticism, and tertiary texts, produced by viewers themselves in the form of letters to the press or, "more importantly, gossip or conversation".

#### Financing a film: The traditional model

To simplify, films were traditionally financed by a package of 'minimi garantiti', presented in the form of bills of exchange presented to a bank, or the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, at fixed intervals. These guarantees were sought by the producer from distributors and covered the initial production costs. It was up to the producer to present an attractive package. He therefore generally engaged the screenwriters, director and actors and, with script in hand, sought a "quadratura economica"<sup>8</sup> to present to distributors and a foreign co-producer.

Since it was possible to check the success of previous projects with which director, producer, screenwriter(s), musicians were involved, and how films of a similar genre profile had performed in different geographical areas of

Italy, it was possible to estimate the amount of return a similar film might have, and to target accordingly big distributors, or small distributors dominating a particular geographical area. Study of the film industry between 1945 and 1976 reveals that producers either move into, and continue to occupy, one market niche, or they come to dominate a particular area of production, but within that, attempt to diversify into different genres. Franco Cristaldi is an example of the latter type, who although he was associated primarily with art cinema on 'difficult' subjects, also produced comedies and less serious films with great success<sup>9</sup>. As we shall show in the section on Rosi's collaborators, screenwriters in this period tended to work right across the genre spectrum of the industry. Directors, however, rapidly become associated with a particular genre or particular type of film. Here we can perhaps see a parallel with the fine art market in that an artist is not seen as 'serious' if he or she displays too radical a shift in style. It is as if those whose function it is to explain artistic output, the critics, can allow stylistic development in time, but not inconsistencies in form or subject. This would to some extent explain critical unease with Rosi's fairy story, C'era una volta (which came directly after Le mani sulla città), and Carmen.

#### Financing a film: The integrated model: television

Today the financial package inevitably includes a variety of co-producers, some of whom will be television companies, banks, State contributions, besides the traditional film distributor. We will see that the name of the director has

become only one element among the many involved in the production equation.

The relationship of cinema to television has also developed over time. Television was launched in 1953 and was for many years characterized by the low number of films shown. In 1975 control of the state television networks was transferred from government to a parliamentary commission. Although theoretically independent, state-owned companies, the three RAI channels have in fact also been "lottizzati" and it has been suggested that this has been a factor in their failure to develop a coherent, commercial policy of differentiated programming (including that of film), so as to avoid competition with each other. After 1976, attempts to beat off competition from private television, particularly Berlusconi's Fininvest group, have also resulted in policy swings as networks frantically copied private television models, or swung back to the public service model. These swings are reflected in investment in film production. RAI started to draw established filmmakers into television production from the mid-1960s. As we will see in a later section, the RAI television films of the early 1970s, such as Bertolucci's Strategia del ragno (1970) were intended primarily as prestige, auteurist, productions for television scheduling. In exchange, filmmakers accepted lower budgets. By the end of the 1970s the RAI channels were aware of the cultural capital that could accrue from co-producing 'cinema di qualità', allowing the production until the mid-1980s of films whose subjects were not considered commercial enough for film distribution. Other areas of programming were then prioritized when competition



with private television channels increased.

The growth of private television in the early seventies started a changed relationship with cinema which accelerated with deregulation in 1976, leading to a duopoly situation by the early 1980s. This is not the place in which to indulge in a complete survey of Fininvest history, but it will be necessary to indicate the main stages of the evolution of the relationship with cinema.

Berlusconi's moves in the early 1970s to establish a national television network were marked by massive use of cheap imported television fiction and by films. These formed the bulk of the "pizzone", the videocassette of programmes delivered each day to his fifteen local television stations and to be broadcast simultaneously<sup>10</sup>. This network became Canale 5, joined by Italia 1 (purchased from the publisher Rusconi) in 1982, and Rete 4 (bought from his main, private competitor, the publisher Mondadori) in 1984. The three channels are differentiated one from the other; Canale 5 is a traditional, general network; Italia 1 is youth oriented; Rete 4 specializes in a female audience. Berlusconi also has investment in a pay-tv channel, Telepiù 1.

From the beginning Berlusconi clearly did not intend to operate in only one media area. A PR company, Publitalia '80, has formed an integral part of his commercial strategy, handling the sale of advertising space on his channels, and publicity for other Fininvest activities. Fininvest now owns, or controls (because of anti-Trust legislation, Il Giornale has been hived off to his brother, Paolo) a national newspaper, several periodicals, the Cinema 5 chain of cinemas.

Fininvest has a production partnership with the Cecchi Gori film company, with whom he has developed the Penta production and distribution company into a force which competes with the US Majors in the Italian cinema market.

When 1985 legislation opened up state subventions to television companies producing films, Berlusconi announced his move into production. Several reasons have been suggested for this, amongst which a desire for cultural respectability and the drying up of the supply of films available for broadcast. It has also been suggested that so successful is the vertical integration practiced by the Fininvest group, that a Penta film does not have to have a successful cinema release in order to cover its costs. These can be amortized through the sale of advertising slots which interrupt the broadcast of the film, by sales to other Fininvest channels in France, Spain, Germany etc, through videocassette pre-sales, and through spin-offs in the form of books, records.

When the traditional economic emphasis of film production completely changes, this will inevitably have an effect on the content and form of the film product. The late 1980s were characterized by a fear that the cinema exhibition sector was now completely obsolete, and the cinema-goer's desires correspondingly unimportant. Rossi suggested that the author-industrialist-public axis would shift to one of publicity-contractor-consumption<sup>11</sup>, and Picard argued that it should be possible to measure the satisfaction 'consumers' attached to different activities such as going to a 1<sup>a</sup> visione cinema, waiting until the film appeared in the suburbs, or waiting until the film was released on video. If, as box office

statistics appeared to indicate, the trend was to video consumption, then there was no point in an expensive film release<sup>12</sup>.

Interestingly, the consensus amongst the different sectors of the industry would now be that cinema exhibition is essential to stimulating public interest, and consumption, of the film in one or more of the film, television, video sectors. It is moreover seen as a positive factor in negotiating good prices for advertising space, and the fullest possible exploitation of the product<sup>13</sup>.

1991 and 1992 statistics show that Fininvest has reduced the number of films it has purchased, and is still involved in Italian production. The market is a complex one and there are several possible reasons for this. The group is heavily indebted and is attempting to reduce its commitments<sup>14</sup>; it is also under attack for failing to observe EC Directive 552 on the proportion of national and community programming which must be shown on its channels. Both are very pressing and will ensure a continued Fininvest presence in film production. To conclude, therefore, the situation has moved in a full circle from one in which the author of a certain kind of cinema was given value, to the other extreme where the director generally had little value in the flow of television programming, to an integrated system where the marketing of a director is important in terms both of cinema exhibition and exploitation in television and video niche markets. The author is also important to the credibility of both Rai and Fininvest channels as important cultural institutions with an international stature, However, whereas current developments



validate the direction-function, the director personally has little actual power in negotiations with such large and all-encompassing organizations.

Financing a film: The integrated model: video

With the growth in importance of the video industry, it is not surprising that videocassette agreements are part of the package. The percentage represented by videocassette rights in the budget vary, but the President of Univideo, Francesco Fanti Salvoni, suggests that:-

"'E difficile valutarlo in generale. Bisogno tener presente che le case cinematografiche investono in prodotti che hanno tre rientri in relazione all'investimento: le sale, l'home video e la vendita alla TV commerciale. L'apporto dell'H.V. può rappresentare dal 15 al 20 per cento ma in certi casi anche di più."<sup>15</sup>

The video market is now sophisticated and diversified in the way that the film distribution market once was. Recent surveys of video users discovered that the profile of the 'strong' customer, was of a young, well-educated, urban male or female who was also a 'strong' user of other media, such as the press. They found that this attractive entity had also started to collect her/his own 'videoteca'. This fact confirms the wisdom of marketing classic Italian films on video, and of categorizing collections by author.

Financing a film: The integrated model: State subventions

That state finance has a crucial role can be judged from Brosio and Santagata's suggestion that 50% of Italian film production applies for state assistance.<sup>16</sup> State subventions are obtained from two sources - the Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo, and the Ente Autonomo Gestione Cinema (Eagc). The Eagc comes under the Treasury and has operated

since 1958 through Cinecittà and the Istituto Luce-Italnoleggio. A prey to the endemic "lottizzazione", or parcelling up of political interests<sup>17</sup>, it is not surprising that in 1992-93 it had to be managed temporarily by the Ministero dell'Industria, with a resultant stagnation in production.

Possible state subventions include a contribution to producers, prizes to producers for quality (13% on exhibition income), contribution to directors (0.4% on exhibition income), prizes to directors for quality, reduced rate loans (at 5.5% interest) for production costs, reduced rate loans for the exhibition sector, contributions to festivals and seasons, the Venice Biennale, promotion abroad, assistance to organizations and film clubs, the cinema d'essai circuit, and for the running of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia and the Istituto Luce-Italnoleggio.

To get access to these reduced rate loans, a producer must have a distributor who has agreed to acquire the film, with a contract providing for the minimi garantiti, or a minimum plus a percentage of the box office takings. The distributor's advances take the form of bills of exchange given to the bank, the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, whose cinema section administers the fund. A producer without a distribution deal cannot have access to reduced rate loans, and therefore has to rely on Article 28 money. In addition, a producer who has obtained a reduced rate loan is entitled to apply to the Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo for further contributions towards interest.

Article 28 provides for a grant of not more than 30% of

production costs of a film designated as 'quality' - that is, "ispirati a finalità artistiche e culturali, realizzati con una formula produttiva che prevede la partecipazione ai costi di produzione di autori, registi, attori e lavoratori"<sup>18</sup> - and is awarded after a film's launch<sup>19</sup>. Requests for all of these subventions have to be scrutinized by the censor, in order to avoid subsidies to the porno film industry.

Producers and directors have become extremely adept at taking advantage of state finance opportunities. In spite of wailings to the contrary, the state subsidy of cinema has been likened to a river of money, encouraging a form of "assistenzialismo opulento, o di lusso"<sup>20</sup>. Since recent surveys have also identified the typical cinema-goer as young, middle-class, well-educated, the system has also been criticized as élitist.

The film industry is characterised by a high proportion of fixed production costs and the interest charges on the minimum guarantee loans are now enormous. In the critical path of the production and post-production process, the phase of principal photography assumes a relatively short place in the time span of a lavish or complex film.

As John Hill has pointed out with respect to the British film industry<sup>21</sup>, these economic relationships exert pressures and set constraints both upon the production process itself and upon the conventions of narrative construction and representation. That is to say that the structures of the industry are able to influence the ideological content of the film product. We will return to this idea later.



### Distribution

The traditional distribution sector has changed radically. When the distribution sector was in a monopoly position, it wielded a great deal of power in terms of choice of genre, actor, subject, etc. In return for heavy investment, the distributor received up to 50% of the profit and pre-sold television and overseas rights in order to hedge the risk to the investment. Besides large firms distributing US and Italian quality films nationwide, there existed distributors specializing in art cinema, low-cost genre films, and staple, middle-of-the-range comedies. It was also possible to make films entirely for the southern market.

The problems of the distribution industry began in the late 1970s with broadcasting deregulation and the proliferation of private television stations. Audiences started to move away from visiting cinemas to watching television. Large numbers of cinemas closed each year, thus robbing distributors of more and more outlets and consequently limiting their ability to finance minimi garantiti.

Today's distribution deals for expensive films include television and videocassette rights. The 1980s have seen a power shift at the more expensive end of the industry to independent television companies who practise vertical integration on the US economic model, albeit with a very Italian face.<sup>22</sup> Berlusconi's distribution arm, Penta, has become as powerful in Italy as the US majors, having access as it does to the Fininvest Cinema 5 exhibition network, and television channels nationally and internationally, and with access to the Fininvest areas of the press and advertising.

Interestingly, whilst the financial difficulties of the late 1980s and early 1990s have resulted in the disappearance of many small to medium size production companies, and the absolute domination of the Italian film distribution market by the US majors, the early 1990s have seen small but significant developments in the Italian independent film sector. Perhaps as a reaction against the increased standardisation of films produced by large industrial concerns, niche markets of a very Italian kind have established themselves. Roberto Cicutto of the leading art house distributor, Mikado, also invests directly in film production, as does the Traxlers' Academy Pictures. Mikado also has 'preferred-status' links with cinemas in Rome and Milan, a crucial factor in negotiating subsequent television sales on the basis of a good showing in the exhibition sector. If we also take into account the role of the Istituto Luce in the market, and the interesting diversifications of actor/directors such as Nanni Moretti and Maurizio Nichetti, it has been suggested that what can be observed is the development of a genuine independent distribution sector<sup>23</sup>.

The finished film on a distributor's listino, or seasonal package of films, is in competition for a favourable place in the market, not only with films from other distributors, with television films, but also with other films on the same listino. Distributors aim to spread risk across the market by combining films of different types and genres in their listino. Statistics of box office returns can help to identify ideal moments in the cinematic season for the launch of particular products - such as political films.

Rosi is, however, a director of the old type, that is, he is not an actor/director/producer and has to rely on his producer to negotiate favourable distribution deals. Although, as we shall show, he manages to control the creative processes through his reliance on a constant team of collaborators (Pasqualino De Santis, Tonino Guerra, Andrea Crisanti etc), he has not himself 'vertically integrated' within the industry. Since the distribution sector has become more complex with the interplay of cinema, television and video sectors, the ability of an individual director to influence greatly the fortunes of his or her film have decreased. It has been suggested that the video industry has come to take over the functions of the cinema distribution industry as it has expanded and become more complex. The marketing of directors and the 'videoteca' phenomenon, however, tend to reinforce a director's existing profile and to militate against creative changes.

### Exhibition

The exhibition sector has been marked by very noticeable changes since the early 1950s. Traditionally at that time, a film was released on the prima visione circuit, ie. in a first-run, large cinema in an inner city centre in the città capozona or main towns in one of the twelve regions which are given a cultural and economic identity in statistical listings. After its initial run it then moved onto the seconda and terza visione circuits, and then out into networks of church halls, etc.

After the 1970s, cinema buildings in urban areas generally upgraded their facilities and joined the 1<sup>a</sup> visione circuit, the alternatives being to become a luci rosse cinema, a cinema



d'essai, or to have a precarious existence as an independent. The rationale for joining the 1<sup>a</sup> visione circuit was to maximize the swift financial return needed on the investment but this strategy has meant that, from the 1980s, when street crime was perceived as a deterrent to travelling into urban centres for entertainment, there remained little place for audiences to go. Suburban and peripheral cinemas have either closed, or no longer show a general entertainment product. Instead, television provides this.

The collapse of Gaumont Italia at the end of the 1980s had a considerable effect on the exhibition sector. Gaumont controlled (owned or leased) 53 1<sup>a</sup> visione cinemas in Rome, Milan, Turin, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Naples and Palermo.<sup>24</sup> These were swiftly purchased by Cannon and, on the demise of that company, were equally swiftly bought by Fininvest and renamed Cinema 5. Obviously this chain will give preference to films produced by its partners, Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori, in association with Penta distribution. We will consider the significance of this development for moves in Rosi's career later in this chapter.

Of course cinema chains are by no means the only factor in the exhibition sector in the early 1990s. Andrea Marcotulli's 1991 survey of the audiovisual market revealed an enormous increase in spending on videocassettes at the expense of visits to the cinema.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the market for television sets is held to be at saturation point, the VCR penetration of households in 1991 amounted to only 28%. This area is regarded as one capable of growth, despite the levelling off occasioned by the recession.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence, the choice

of production company, and distribution agreements including videocassette rights is extremely important.

### Spreading the financial risk

All these economic sectors interact with other cultural industries, increasingly with television, but also with other 'spin-offs', such as books, records and other merchandise. It is significant here that, whilst Francesco Rosi is primarily regarded as a political and realist director, half of his production has in fact been in the form of adaptations, and these of famous authors who have a firm industrial position. Particular products, such as art films, rely on a strong relationship with the press and the apparatus of film criticism by journalists to validate and publicize the product. Journalism is also an important adjunct to the film festival apparatus, where films are assigned labels for technical excellence or for some criterion of artistic quality.

Here the State also enters the arena by granting financial support to the more prestigious events which can be seen to present Italian talent to the world, via its press and television reports. As we have seen, the State also intervenes directly in the cinema industry in various ways.

With the shift in the early 1960s of the political consensus away from the right, State support in various forms was a more constant help to quality production.

State legislation has also had effects within the film industry, resulting in some protection from foreign competition, and the bringing of television money into film production as a result of various tax shelter provisions.

It can also be argued that the deregulation of State broadcasting had the most profound effect, resulting in the decimation of the film industry, whilst paradoxically favouring the proliferation of private television stations which now, together, consume 6,577 films a year.<sup>27</sup> Imports of films and television programmes amounted to \$382 million in 1989; Italian film/tv exports earned \$53 million.<sup>28</sup>

The European Community's MEDIA programme also comes into the category of institutional intervention. The industry has become adept at tapping into EC funds - from EMG (Euro Media Garanties) which guarantees bank loans needed to produce films for cinema and television, EFDO (European Film Distribution Office), the European Script Fund, Eurimages (the pan-European support fund for the promotion of co-production and distribution of feature films), Media Salles (promoting the exhibition sector), EVE (aiming to improve the distribution and marketing of European films on the video market), and several funds concerned with independent cinema. The subtitling of European films on videocassette has been a particularly useful development in opening up new markets. Film directors cannot but help, therefore, having to engage with not one but many cultural industries in order to continue making films.

### Hollywood

Finally, we must mention the constant and important factor of Hollywood in Italian film production. US film production is characterised by a limited number of productions of high investment cost and high quality. The USA has come to dominate the European film industries in various ways,



resulting in a tailoring of European products to imitate, or avoid competition with the direct output of the massive investment from that country.

The US industry's reliance on genres and bankable stars has to a large extent been copied in Italy and, in its most extreme form, can be seen in the scrabbling after filoni, cheap imitations of US fashions in production.

The dominant reason for the imitation of American product was not due so much to cultural prestige but to the increasingly aggressive domination of the Italian film distribution sector by the US Majors, to the extent that the US films' share of the Italian market is now around 70%<sup>29</sup>. The recent, well publicized debates around the 1993 GATT talks included PR campaigns by European distributors and exhibitors who need US product in order to make money. Of the 28 distributors listed in Il Giornale dello Spettacolo, not just the US majors' companies, but a total of 25 companies distribute US films which constitute varying proportions of each listino. Moreover, as Nicholas Garnham suggests, the development of the US film companies into multi-media conglomerates has inaugurated a radically new phase of world market control:-

"The power and prosperity of the majors is based upon control of worldwide distribution networks which give them alone the possibility to balance, on world scale, production investment with box-office revenue. From that base they alone, helped by the limits placed upon the US TV networks by the Federal Government, have been able to expand with maximum efficiency into the new markets for filmed entertainment, broadcast TV and now pay-TV, as well as into associated spin-off markets such as records, books and toys."<sup>30</sup>

The American industry needs its European markets for film and videocassettes but the natural process towards market

domination results in progressively less space for Italian films to cover their costs and make a profit.

It is interesting to see that, whereas Japan now dominates technologically, it is still the US patterns of commercial exploitation of new technology which influence institution and products. Japanese interests have recently bought or invested in the US film industry, mainly to exploit the riches of film archival holdings, but it will be interesting to see when and how Japanese tastes and conservatism will be mobilized to control a new multinational product.<sup>31</sup> This conservatism may militate against films with a more challenging content.

Current industrial battles have thrown into relief the importance of interactive multimedia developments in the near future. Companies which combine to pool archive material, interactive technology and to take advantage of international organizational structures will dominate in this developing field. Again, these developments will privilege the production company and the big industrial players over the individual filmmaker where product control is concerned.

Where does Francesco Rosi fit into this picture?

In the next sections, we will explore the 'cultural/economic value' attached to Rosi and his collaborators, and how he has managed to function as a director in various phases of industrial development.

### 3. Rosi and his collaborators' place in the charts

Giuseppe Perrella has laid considerable emphasis on the role of the director as author of a film and focus of economic and structural factors contributing to the success of a film.<sup>32</sup>

However, it must be said that the emphasis on the director as

the focus of industrial factors which privilege a strong individuality and personal style as the manifestation of a subjectivity which imposes its own original mark and unique character on the film product, is a characteristic of only a very small proportion of Italian production. Since the war only around 2% of Italian annual production falls within any criterion of art, or quality, the remainder being more or less standard products ranging from the immensely entertaining to the merely competent.

Rosi's production can be shown to fall firmly in the 'quality' end of the market, which we have defined in the Introduction, yet it is produced within the mainstream of the film industry. We can show that Rosi is able to exert a more than average level of control over his films and, as such, that his role coincides with Perrella's definition of the guarantor of a product and of quality. It is interesting to examine Perrella's other main variable factor in a film's success, the direction-function, using Rosi as a case study. Rosi's film-making has been characterized by repeated use of the same collaborators for many years at a time, making for a higher than average level of personal artistic control and an ease of working relationships which arguably contributes to a certain visual and narrative style.

On the other hand, when we look at the work of Rosi's collaborators across the board, ie. in a larger context, it becomes strikingly evident that producers have played a seminal role in these, at first sight homogeneous, professional alliances.<sup>33</sup>

Until the mid-1970s the Italian film industry retained



something of the earlier, craft ethos. Writers, editors, musicians, directors of photography, camera operators, worked right across the spectrum of output, from the 2% or so of 'quality' films per year, through mainstream filoni and genres. From the 1970s onwards, soaring costs have led to the polarisation and specialisation of workers (a) into genres, eg. porno, comedy, art cinema, or (b) to association with a particular type of glossy, expensive production to which their own reputation and previous track record would 'entitle' them. Rosi, his director of photography, Pasqualino De Santis, and his co-writer, Tonino Guerra, fall into the latter category. If, however, we look at the cases of individual collaborators of Francesco Rosi, we see that the situation is much less rigid than Perrella's monolithic structuring into categories suggests.

In order to identify patterns of collaboration, information was assessed in three ways.

Firstly, a diachronic view of the career of each collaborator was obtained by listing their work chronologically and obtaining the box office receipts for each film.

Secondly, a synchronic view of the industry was obtained by examining each year. Rosi's associates were listed together with the projects upon which they had worked, the box office returns and genre designation for each.

Thirdly, the work of each collaborator was assessed by genre categories, box office receipts and prizes for quality.

These correlations show the enormous influence of producers in assembling teams of creative workers. Producers also specialize and are therefore known points of reference when

assembling a project. Most Italian screenwriters, editors and directors of photography work across the genre spectrum and are by no means consistently associated with box office successes. However, the winning of prizes, or association with prize-winning films do appear to be significant. All Rosi's collaborators have this in common.

A detailed assessment of Rosi's collaborators is appended as Appendix Four.

To conclude, analysis year by year of the films with which Rosi's collaborators were involved shows, not surprisingly, the importance of personal contacts at a career's early stages. Many of these were facilitated by producers. Once formed, Rosi, for instance, has tended to maintain these relationships continuously.

Contrary to Perrella's assumption, it is not the box office returns of the films of Rosi's creative collaborators which have acted as guarantees of commercial success, because these have generally been inconsistent. We have to look at careers over time to see patterns emerging and in order to be able to state that, generally, his co-workers tend to work more often on films which can be categorized as art cinema, and which regularly win awards. As I shall show in the next section, it is crucial for the director and producer themselves to have regular box office successes. Lack of success bears out the old industry saying that you are "only as good as your last film", involving greater difficulties in financing subsequent projects.

What does emerge from this study is the key role of the producer in bringing together creative teams. The tendency of

the film and allied critical industries to commodify directors and attribute creative decisions to them alone has been to the detriment of consideration of the role of the producer.

In Rosi's case, his own predisposition to work with those he knows, has coincided neatly with the practices of a small sector of the Italian film industry. Although there has been no renewal amongst his regular collaborators, Pasqualino De Santis, Tonino Guerra, Ruggero Mastroianni, the international nature of Carmen, Cronaca di una morte annunciata and Dimenticare Palermo have imposed new producers and big budget crewing on him. He and his colleagues have been at the stage of their careers where their experience and talents enabled them to respond to the consequently large financial constraints and responsibilities, but at the expense of artistic complexity and innovation. We will examine how directors and producers who move into this 'quality genre' appear to become trapped by the very mechanisms which have enabled them to survive in the industry. Because they continue to 'deliver the goods' with ever-increasing budgets, in costly co-productions, they appear associated closely with that genre and are only offered that sort of level of production. And the cycle repeats itself.

## PART 2: ROSI'S CAREER IN CONTEXT

### PHASE 1: Neorealism and after

The film industry in this phase of Rosi's career is marked by a move from a craft to a capitalist industry. Although early neorealist films were popular in terms of box office receipts which reflected the political feeling in the country after the war, when the 'Italian' version of Visconti's La terra trema,



(1947) on which Rosi had laboriously worked as assistant director, was released in 1949, it was greeted with violent disapproval critically and did badly at the box office. There were many reasons for the film's lack of success, perhaps the main one being its difference, economically, ideologically and aesthetically, from other films of 1948 and 1949.

Production was accompanied by constant problems with finance; the film was conceived of in terms of not only dramatising the social conditions of Sicilian fishermen but also a political agenda of showing how change might be achieved; filming took place on location in Sicily with a cast entirely of non-professional actors. La terra trema perhaps took the neorealist emphasis on the social and cultural context of the types of people depicted to its extreme in Visconti's search for authenticity of place; character and dialogue, through which reality could be revealed. Whereas the status of Vittorio De Sica as a popular actor, as well as director, and the efforts of the producer, Alfredo Guarini, were able to rescue Ladri di biciclette after its disastrous first launch in 1948 with the result that it made a 100% profit, this did not happen with La terra trema<sup>34</sup>. Public and critical reaction to La terra trema was very mixed, generally bemoaning the lack of plot, stars, and the slow pace<sup>35</sup>.

This example typifies the changing industrial context of the time. The period of the late 1940s and 1950s is marked by a rapid return to standard industrial practices and hierarchical working relationships. As production budgets increased in an attempt to provide competition to US imports, so the industry moved towards an American, capitalist model, where the demands

of investors were important in defining the product. Ladri di biciclette showed the importance of PR and planning in a film's launch.

The wider political struggle, which resulted in overwhelming Christian Democrat success in the 1948 elections, was also reflected in the Italian film industry. Christian Democrat politicians and appointees to state enti opposed neorealist films on the grounds that they presented a bad image of Italy abroad. The passing of the Legge Andreotti in 1950 was the culmination of that politician's attempts since 1947 to manipulate and control the film industry. Quaglietti suggests that Andreotti 'saw that he needed producers on his side if he was to impose controls on the types of films made'<sup>36</sup>. Andreotti's dubbing tax, the "leggina" of 1947 swelled the funds available to producers in the form of state loans, but the bureaucratic mechanisms by which access to these funds was gained constituted an additional form of censorship. Not only the screenplay (later amended to the treatment) and budget, but also details of technical and creative personnel had to be submitted to the Sezione Autonoma Cinema of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. Similar controls were put in place for the granting of the essential "nulla osta", licencing the distribution and exhibition of a film. The 32 people who signed the open letter protesting against the censor's treatment of Germi's Gioventù perduta were directors, not producers.

Additionally, the impact, both in cultural as well as economic terms, of the vast backlog of US films released onto the Italian market at the end of the war, threatening saturation

of the market, brought the industry to crisis point<sup>37</sup>.

That neorealist films were not regarded as an answer to the crisis is shown by industry reactions, calling for:-

"... registi lavoratori, quei registi che, se non il linguaggio, conoscono la lingua cinematografica e sanno raccontare alla buona qualche cosa, pur di far trascorrere decorosamente le ore di spettacolo che il film, come elemento commerciale, deve garantire..."<sup>38</sup>

Producers wanted films with some guarantee of success; commercial products with stars on the American model.<sup>39</sup>

Some of the constraints on production can be identified from examining the market performance of different types of films in the 1950s.

Statistics of box office returns by genre illustrate the essential conservatism of the industry in this period. The most popular genres by far were comedies and dramas. Between 1950 and 1955 the range of genres increased each year, and then started to decrease again. Although moderately successful and low-earning films cover a wider genre range, there are still proportionately similar clusters of films in the main categories of comedy and drama. Prizes for quality, predictably enough, tend to be awarded to films in these two categories. 'Drama', for example, is able to encompass Antonioni's Cronaca di un amore and Matarazzo's Catene, an extremely popular melodrama.

In the 1950s between 68% and 82% of the Italian films released each year did not earn more than Lire 300,000,000 at the box office. During these years, as the number of blockbusters increased (and the US/Italian joint project (or compartecipazione), War and Peace in 1956 is a good example of



this), less ambitious films were robbed of income. 1954, for example, saw a big increase in the number of films having only a mediocre financial return. This material does, however, give some idea of the breadth of opportunity, at least within the film medio available to someone starting out in the industry because of the sheer number of films in production. By the time Rosi came to make his first film he had already acquired ten years' experience in the industry at all levels of financial reward.

### Apprenticeship

Francesco Rosi's first film, La sfida, was made in 1957 and released in 1958. His career, however, started in 1948 and this section will discuss what sort of professional formation it was.

Rosi claims that, although technically ready to direct his own film in the early fifties, he in fact felt himself not ready to do so.<sup>40</sup>

Then as now there were two main ways of starting upon a career in the film industry, either through making one's mark on a course at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, or of using contacts to gain experience and recognition. Francesco Rosi was born on 15 November 1922 in Naples. He has described in two lengthy interviews<sup>41</sup> his cultural and social background and the events which facilitated his move towards the film industry. Rosi states that his father refused to let him try for entry to the CSC, insisting that he study Law. Briefly, he and his circle of friends had their interest in cinema aroused and developed through the G.U.F whilst at university, where they also came under the influence of the theatre

director, Ettore Giannini. The call-up of 1943 scattered them all but, after the liberation of Florence, Rosi was able to return to Naples where, through this circle of friends and acquaintances (which included Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Raffaele La Capria, Antonio Ghirelli) he became involved with Radio Napoli, and with writing reviews and sketches for Giannini. During the period in Florence, whilst caught between three armies, he and his Neapolitan comrades had made contact with the resistance, among whom Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti. Rosi attributes his education in Italian art and architecture to his enforced inactivity during this time.

During this brief period, Rosi's ambition was to become involved in filmmaking but he had no idea how to go about it; he practiced writing treatments and screenplays for himself, sold sketches and illustrations to soldiers of the US Army of occupation, worked on book illustrations and collaborated with Giannini<sup>42</sup>.

Of Giannini's influence he has said, "Ettore mi ha insegnato ad affrontare analiticamente un'idea e, soprattutto, a "faticare"<sup>43</sup>. From Giannini he also learnt to be at ease with actors and to translate a script into mise en scène.<sup>44</sup>

Rosi's real opportunity came after he had acted as Giannini's assistant on a theatre production of Il voto. Rosi's friend, Achille Millo, had been offered the role of Visconti's assistant on La terra trema. Wanting to continue his acting, he suggested Rosi to Visconti who, at that time was surrounded by people inexperienced in cinema<sup>45</sup>. For Rosi, "Ce fut une école exceptionnelle. J'y ai appris une méthode de travail et le désir de faire vivre à travers un style et non dans

l'immédiateté.<sup>46</sup>" During the 6-7 months on location around Aci Trezza in Sicily, Rosi's job as one of Visconti's assistants, was to take minutely detailed notes in various books of the technical conditions and staging of each shot. He had to note the lenses used, focal lengths, number of takes and what was in each shot, camera movements, camera height, atmospheric conditions, sounds. Another book contained a description of each frame for the screenplay. Another served as a continuity record, where Rosi had to minutely describe and sketch each framing, the atmospheric conditions, actors' clothes and gestures, for use at the editing stage. He was also responsible for camera movements in close up; the other assistant, Franco Zeffirelli, was in charge of the actors.<sup>47</sup> After filming La terra trema was over, Rosi was entrusted with the dubbing of the 'Italian' version of the film. This was slightly reduced in length and was disowned by Visconti<sup>48</sup>. As we have seen, Rosi has paid tribute to the extraordinary training in many aspects of direction which he received from Visconti in Sicily. The experience must also have provided another sort of education into the difficulties of financing an independent, realist film with an ideological agenda. The production ran out of funds at several points, those from the communist party and from Visconti's sale of family jewelry going first, with Rosi amongst others left in a Catania hotel as pledges against unpaid bills as Visconti went in search of more financing. The production was finally rescued by Universal Produzione with funds from the Banca di Sicilia. At its presentation at the Venice Film Festival it was received with an uproar of shouts and whistles, and had a very



mixed subsequent critical reception in Italy. Its takings at 31.12.1952 totalled only Lire 26,500,000.

Rosi continued to gain a variety of experience in the industry, writing treatments, working in the theatre, dubbing films. He worked as assistant director on Luciano Emmer's Domenica d'agosto (1950), a first feature for Emmer after a distinguished series of documentaries. The film follows the stories of a series of characters on a 'typical' Sunday on the beach at Ostia. The trade papers liked it and it was praised for its realism and for Emmer's handling of the actors and situations. It had moderate success at the box office, appearing about half way down the charts. Several critics disliked it at first but, after its success in France, it got better reviews in Italy.<sup>49</sup>

The scriptwriter of Domenica d'Agosto was Sergio Amidei, who had worked on Roma città aperta and whom Rosi credits with transferring some of the formulae of neorealism into traditional Italian comedy:-

"Amidei ha portato nella commedia tutta la sua esperienza e inventiva di autore che aveva improntato il periodo del neorealismo, assieme a Zavattini e a Suso Cecchi. ... I film di Emmer sono segnati dall'apporto di Amidei: trattare argomenti più leggeri mettendoci dentro il risultato di un'esperienza della scuola poi definita neorealista. Portare nella commedia l'esperienza realistica. La funzione sociale di questo tipo di cinema era quella di comunicare al pubblico una certa immagine di se stesso, che tutto sommato era molto vicina alla realtà, e quindi aveva una funzione di verifica, di specchio, mostrarci come eravamo fatti."<sup>50</sup>

This then was a film which was not only financially successful, but critically successful in France and Italy - and whose critical success was linked with its social concerns and its use of the conventions of realism. Moreover, we see

here that Rosi is according it value on just these grounds, rather than on the fact that the film is often very touching and amusing. He himself has a small role as an intellectual! In the same year Rosi acted as Assistant Director to Raffaello Matarazzo on Tormento (1950), starring Amedeo Nazzari and Yvette Sanson, a florid melodrama with a typically convoluted plot. Raffaello Matarazzo was one of the most successful and prolific of '50s directors. The two films Rosi worked on for Matarazzo, I figli di nessuno (1951) and Tormento had a huge popular success. These were both produced by Labor/Titanus, coming first and second in the national chart, earning over 900 and 700 million lire respectively, when the average ticket price was 103.7 lire. Matarazzo had made 14-15 films prior to the 1950s when the cycle he made for the Titanus studio were enormously popular. Tormento topped the Italian box office lists, making over Lire 700,000,000. Matarazzo however remained in the critical wilderness until the 1970s when his films were re-evaluated in the same way that neorealism was, by critics who stood at a distance from the intellectual struggles of the late 1940s. As part of that re-evaluation, Matarazzo was seen to share some characteristics with neorealism.

Neorealismo rosa is the name given to that popular cinema of the 1950s which had no pretensions to operating the cutting edge of left-wing critiques of society, but instead did address the preoccupations of ordinary people - how women could combine work and family, how to get access to the rewards of postwar, industrial society, the conflict between archaic, rural social practices and those necessary for

survival in a modern Italy etc. These films used many of the stylistic devices of neorealism - location shooting in recognizable places, working class characters and themes - but heightened the emotional charge of the narrative and ignored the socialist political agenda.

Claudio Carabba, however, suggests that Matarazzo has more than one might think in common with directors such as Visconti and De Sica, not only in the mastery of melodrama, but also in the ability to use the production philosophy of a studio to his own advantage.<sup>51</sup>

Rosi, moreover, was involved with not one, but two Matarazzo films, going on the work again as Assistant Director in 1951 on I figli di nessuno, another melodrama featuring the Nazzari/Sanson partnership. This film was the third highest grossing in a season in which 118 Italian films were released. Nazzari was already an established star but Spinazzola suggests that it was no accident that this actor chose to work on low quality films in the 1950s. The persona that he projected took advantage of the fact that neorealist cinema had failed to establish a widely representative masculine figure, living in an industrial world, to whom audiences could relate. Nazzari's persona represented the recreation of a type from a mythic past.<sup>52</sup> Matarazzo was in no doubt of his own expertise in identifying what audiences wanted and of his ability to move them. In a letter to L'Unità on 18 December 1955 he wrote:-

"Ora il sentimento, secondo me, non è facile né è difficile, o c'è o non c'è, o arriva al cuore degli spettatori o non arriva, questo è il problema; se fosse così facile e alla portata di tutti il commuovere una platea, le miniere d'oro e di



brillanti diventerebbero banali speculazioni di fronte a una così sicura fonte di guadagno."<sup>53</sup>

We will return to Rosi's use of emotion and feeling in a later chapter.

Astutely, Rosi balanced work on the Matarazzo film by three other projects in 1951. He collaborated in the screenplay and acted as assistant director on Emmer's Parigi è sempre Parigi, a comedy about Italian football fans in Paris, starring Aldo Fabrizi, Lucia Bosè, Ave Ninchi and Marcello Mastroianni. Like Domenica d'agosto, it was also produced by Sergio Amidei. It made Lire 214,314,917, just scraping into the top 50% of box office takings, but ahead of Visconti's Bellissima, on which Rosi also worked that year, which was 68th with Lire 152,700,000. Bellissima won a 1951-2 nastro d'argento for Best Actress (Anna Magnani). Producers who were unwilling to take risks were blamed for Visconti's only being able to make three films in ten years. Whistles greeted its first screening in Milan but, whereas the uncommercial nature of its subject was acknowledged, it was likened to key realist films like Paisà and Roma città aperta<sup>54</sup>.

Rosi's other project which had come to fruition that year was to write the treatment, with Ettore Giannini, for Luigi Zampa's Processo alla città. This was a story of corruption and the camorra in Neapolitan society, based on the Cuocolo affair which Rosi had worked up on his own when he first went to Rome in the winter of 1946-47<sup>55</sup>, and had developed with Giannini.

In that cinematic season, Rosi had achieved credits on a variety of substantial productions - a melodrama which was the

1950s equivalent of a blockbuster; a comedy which was firmly within the ranks of the film medio, but which confused the critics who approached the latest Emmer with some reverence but who could not quite equate Parigi è sempre Parigi with art because it contained so many doubles entendres and scurrilous jokes.<sup>56</sup> He had also worked on a film by a prestigious director who had surprised his critics with Bellissima. Visconti was felt to have combined poetry and personal style with reaching "il cuore del pubblico commovendo senza ricorrere ai lenocinii dei grandi effetti."<sup>57</sup> Processo alla città had also achieved recognition for quality, gaining a 1952-3 nastro d'argento for the film as a whole, and 1953 Berlin Film Festival Silver Cup. Spinazzola, however, characterizes both Bellissima and Processo alla città as box office disasters<sup>58</sup>.

In 1951-52 Rosi again worked on very different productions. He brought to completion as director a historical co-production about Anita Garibaldi, Camicie rosse, starring Raf Vallone, Anna Magnani, Serge Reggiani, Alain Cuny. This had taken two years to film, dogged by disagreements between the director, Goffredo Alessandrini and the production company which had resulted in Alessandrini's departure when the film was nearly finished. Critics detected a certain unevenness in tone, but this did not deter the public, who ensured that it received good receipts - Lire 313,948,412.

Rosi's other project was as assistant director on Antonioni's I vinti. This was not a financial or a critical success, being listed at 108th out of 148 films that season which was dominated by Comencini's Pane, amore e fantasia.

Rosi claims that his choices during the 1950s were quite deliberate, that he always chose who he worked with and that, rather than acting as assistant on a film which did not interest him, he preferred to work as a dubbing director on a film of his choice, or in the theatre.<sup>59</sup> I vinti would have extended his range in the art cinema sector, and Camicie rosse enhanced his reputation for professional competence.

In 1953 Rosi returned to a collaboration with Ettore Giannini, for whom he acted as Assistant Director on Carosello Napoletano. The film, produced by Lux, was an extremely successful adaptation for the screen of a review which had already been successful in the theatre. With box office receipts of over Lire 753,000,000, it came near the top of the financial league for the 1953-54 season. It was the first (and Bolaffi suggests, the best) of the short-lived genre of the musical review, and aroused some interest at the Cannes film festival<sup>60</sup>. Notable for its panorama of Neapolitan types, characters and customs, it also gave a role to Sophia Loren.

Rosi's next two projects were the widely differing Proibito and Visconti's Senso in 1954. The former was Mario Monicelli's first film on his own after his association with Steno and starred Amedeo Nazzari. This was an adaptation (by Monicelli and Suso Cecchi D'Amico) of Grazia Deledda's La madre and a franco-italian co-production. Its box office receipts place it firmly in the category of film medio with Lire 279,887,420. What is interesting is that this type of production was decreasing in numbers, marking the beginning of the polarization of production between small numbers of high



earning films, and large numbers of only moderately successful films.

Senso, on which Rosi also worked as assistant director, was 7th in popularity in the 1954 lists. Besides its financial success it attracted a 1954 *nastro d'argento* for G R Aldo's photography, and huge critical acclaim. Significantly, Senso and Bellissima marked the labelling of Visconti as an 'auteur' and the beginning of a process of defining landmarks of postwar Italian cinema<sup>61</sup>. Senso is also a film which, besides being an adaptation of a book by Camillo Boito, addressed serious issues - of divorce and betrayal, national identity through the genre of the melodramatic costume drama. A personal drama is interlaced with momentous historical events which are evoked cinematically through an enormous accumulation of historically correct detail. The film could be said to share with the 1950s peplum epics an epic scenario whereby, although the characters are defeated (eaten by lions or beaten at the battle of Custoza), yet their world view (Christianity or Italian nationalism) is presented as surviving, and with hindsight we know that it triumphs. Yet a parallel with the fading and disappointment of left-wing hopes and aspirations in the wake of World War Two has also been detected<sup>62</sup>. Undoubtedly Visconti's cinema was an example to Rosi of the possibility of combining the popular - the emotional, melodramatic and conflictual - with the political and serious - big themes, nationalism and betrayal. Besides its multi-layered narrative, the film is characterized by visual complexity. We shall see later how Rosi's mastery of cinematographic technique and mastery of visual complexity

also marks him off as an 'auteur'.

In 1955 Italian production and co-production slipped from 160 to 143. Compared to the previous season, we can see a contraction in the number of films making box office receipts of Lire 300,000,000, and in the Lire 500,000,000 band, which were the strata of the industry where well-known directors such as Monicelli, Blasetti, Campogalliani, De Santis, Paolella and Franciolini aimed their films. On the other hand, there was a decrease in the number of very unsuccessful films making less than Lire 100,000,000. Polarization was having the effect of weeding out weak projects and robbing average products of income. Racconti romani (1955), directed by Gianni Franciolini and on which Rosi worked as co-writer with Amidei, Age and Scapelli, was an adaptation of Moravia's book. It was a colour film whose cast included Vittorio De Sica and Totò. It used real locations in the markets and streets of Rome and was defined as a 'film episodico'. With box office receipts of over Lire 760,000,000, it was among the five most popular films of the season.

In the 1955-56 cinematic season the number of Italian films produced decreased to 93. Rosi was part of the same script writing team as for Racconti romani, and was assistant director on Emmer's Il bigamo (1956). This was a comedy starring Marcello Mastroianni, Vittorio De Sica and Memmo Carotenuto (who won a 1955-56 *nastro d'argento* for best supporting actor). Co-produced by Royal Film, Rome and Filmel-Alba Film of Marseille, it was only moderately successful in Italy, making just over Lire 250,000,000. Again, this box office band remained fairly static, but the number of films achieving

returns in the Lire 300,000,000 and 100,000,000 bands decreased. The first of the Poveri, ma belli films made over Lire 900,000,000.

More interesting was Rosi's involvement with the 1956 Lux-Vides film Kean, genio e sregolatezza, on which he was one of the co-writers and is credited with "assistenza tecnica". Although its star, Vittorio Gassman, is credited as director, Rosi was director in all but name and was entrusted with that task by the producer, Franco Cristaldi. The film is a showcase for the acting talents of Gassman, whose sumptuous costumes stand out, jewel-like, against the black or sepia tones of the sets. With scenes set in theatres and taverns in London, there are a sizeable number of extras. It was not, however, a financial success, making little over Lire 124,000,000.

At the level of professional preparation, by the time of his début Rosi had worked with and for intellectuals, master craftsmen and master hacks, who had a firm grasp of public taste of the time and knew how to manipulate and satisfy it. He worked for directors at opposite ends of the political spectrum, from Visconti and Antonioni to Matarazzo and Monicelli.

His experience included participating in Visconti's meticulous preparation, use of untrained actors and construction of grand 'set pieces' (sequences mustering many actors and extras, with complicated, multi-camera movements); Emmer's economic evocation of place and social class and his and Franciolini's ability to capture the essence of the situation of the average Italian, at points of great social change; Matarazzo's



manipulation of his audience's emotions. His experience also included how to operate within a tiny budget, and how to operate within a large production team, using well-known stars. Writing treatments, such as that for Zampa's Processo alla città even allowed the reception for political themes to be tested out.<sup>63</sup> He worked with some of the best scriptwriters, camera operators, editors and designers, drawing many of them in to work for him on his own films later.

From the point of view of constructing a convincing career profile, it is significant that he achieved a balance between consistent box office successes on recognizable genre products, and work on films which achieved critical recognition and prizes for quality (and little in the way of financial success). This pattern can be seen in the early career of some of his collaborators - the working on a wide range of films, with enough box office and critical successes for one to appear an attractive proposition for a certain type of producer.

Other young directors, Vancini, Zurlini, De Seta, Olmi, in the 1950s prepared themselves for their début in feature films by an apprenticeship in short films. The phase of neorealismo rosa gave others the opportunity to make their first film. Rosi followed neither of these pathways.

The professional experience gained during the making of his apprenticeship films was obviously valuable to Rosi, - and marketable.

In this period Rosi had also 'rescued' two other films - Alessandrini's Camicie rosse and Vittorio Gassman's Kean. The

experience of delivering a film in difficult circumstances with a difficult star would have enhanced his worth to a producer. However, at the same time, other directors were achieving success with less mainstream films. These showed that there was a market for films with a more difficult subject matter than standard genre fare, and that new directors and stars could be appreciated by the public.

Rosi chose to work his way up in the mainstream of the industry.

The next section considers how he has managed to stay there.

#### PHASE 2: Starting out

By the end of the 1950s a convergence of economic, social and political factors favoured the emergence of independent film producers willing to take risks on financing more experimental or more political films. On the economic front, by the end of the 1950s, the backlog of US films released in Italy after the war had been all but exhausted in number. The US industry was going through one of its own crises, which meant less competition for the Italians in their own market. There was increased prosperity and greater employment, coupled with expansion of northern industrial centres and immigration from the South. Politically there was a more or less smooth movement towards more centre-left forms of government and public taste was disposed to be interested in more radical products.

The 1960s represent the last throes of a period of transition from an artisan form of industry, to a modern, capitalist, internationally integrated one. The industry had to do this to accommodate US interference in the market, which was also

having to try to combat the substantial loss of its own audiences to television. Box office receipts may have risen by 5% in 1969 but these were achieved by increasing ticket prices, the number of spectators having dropped by 10% between 1967 and 1968, and about 350 cinemas having closed<sup>64</sup>. The drop in the number of outlets to which films could be distributed inevitably affected the financing of productions, and the range of products contracted. Nonetheless it was possible for people to make their début in the industry. Quaglietti considers the constant "Red Scares", and calls by Catholic organizations to resist left-wing films, were used by the Minister and by ANICA to divert attention from their moves in other directions, such as the fact that 'quality' was often defined in terms of box office success rather than artistic merit.<sup>65</sup> It did mean that directors like Visconti, or Rosi, who tended to innovate in terms of subject matter, did not find it easy to mount film productions.

La sfida (1958) was produced by Franco Cristaldi, who has been a determining force in Italian cinema by launching 'new' directors and subjects, and was a Lux/Vides/Cinecittà coproduction with Suevia Films, Madrid.<sup>66</sup> It aroused a great deal of interest on its release, not least because it had been awarded (ex aequo with Malle's Les amants) the special Jury prize at Venice in 1958, the San Giorgio prize of the Fondazione Cini, three nastri d'argento for best original subject, best supporting actor (Vingelli), best production; and the 1958 Noci d'oro for best direction. It came 15th in the national listings, with Lire 496,281.739, a very high placing amidst comedies, mythological and other adventures.



La sfida was described as a drama, but its similarity to the American gangster genre did not go unremarked. Rosi was praised for his talent, even if elements of the story, or his political position, were criticized.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, in critical reactions to La sfida we see the shadow of Rosi's publicity strategy, and his claim to be an inheritor of neorealism. In this way he stakes a claim to seriousness of purpose, to a moral imperative, and to consideration in the context of contemporary Italian cinema.

The success of La sfida enabled him to make I magliari for Vides/Titanus, released in 1959, starring Renato Salvatori and Alberto Sordi. Sordi was by then a star. Rosi claimed to have realized the risks of using his often grotesque, stereotypical characterizations, but to have done it in the interests of highlighting the story for a mass public.<sup>68</sup> Certainly Sordi's evocation of known stereotypical character traits of the lower middle classes provided a point of anchorage in this story of marginalized men (mainly Southerners) working illegally in Germany. The subject of emigration gave the film a certain topicality not found in others around its placing (16th) in the national charts.

I magliari won a silver cup at the San Sebastian festival, and a 1960 nastro d'argento for the best black and white photography.

Whilst critics praised Rosi's evocation of the world of the magliari and the boom of postwar Germany, they were less enamoured of Sordi's performance. Sordi's presence, however, was known to produce financial rewards<sup>69</sup>. The film was also criticized for Rosi's uneasy integration of the love story

into the film, distracting from more incisive conclusions on the nature of economic and social exploitation.<sup>70</sup>

The key cinematic event at the beginning of the 1960s was, however, Fellini's La dolce vita. La dolce vita showed the film industry that it was possible to make money out of controversial subjects, treated in non-standard narrative forms. Rosi's Salvatore Giuliano (1961) operated in the same way. Both films provoked scandals, public outcry and, in the latter case, a parliamentary enquiry into allegations of collusion between the police, the carabinieri and the mafia in Sicily.

Salvatore Giuliano was a Lux/Vides/Galatea coproduction. Cristaldi claimed to have suggested the idea of a film on the bandit to Rosi.<sup>71</sup> It established Rosi's reputation abroad by winning the Silver Bear at Berlin. Although rejected by Venice, it won nastri d'argento for its direction, music and black and white photography, a Golden Goblet for best director, and the San Fedele foreign critics' prize for best film of 1962.

Films on banditry have ever been popular in Italy but a serious consideration of its causes and consequences had been stifled up until then by censorship and more or less explicit threats.<sup>72</sup> With the passing of time the Giuliano affair came to acquire less of a purely Sicilian interest and more of a national and international importance.

Salvatore Giuliano was a tremendously important film on several levels, not only for the political consequences of its notoriety. It was a politically committed film which also offered a rigorous treatment of the problems of the South and

courageously faced up to the material. It was also innovative in form - in a way that neorealist films had not been. Rosi spent a great deal of time with his collaborators researching the background material for the film and used the Viterbo court records faithfully. In his search for authenticity he shot most of the film in the places where the actions happened and used predominantly non-professional actors, an unusual strategy for a film which made more than 700 million lire at the box office. The film's premier was also unusual, taking place in the main square in Giuliano's home town of Montelepre<sup>73</sup>.

With very few exceptions, critical reaction was one of admiration. Like many of Rosi's subsequent films, the film was discussed not only in the film columns, but also on the cultural pages. Discussion concentrated on its innovative language and the seriousness of its theme<sup>74</sup>. It also placed Rosi in a historical and cultural context, mentioning him as an "apprentice" of Visconti, and an heir to the themes of neorealism. Furthermore, it placed him in the stream of directors who were seeking to interpret Gramsci's ideas on screen<sup>75</sup>.

Le mani sulla città, which was shot in Naples in the Spring of 1963, was much less financially successful. ANICA statistics suggest that films earning around 300 million lire generally earned 18% of their receipts in their first year,<sup>76</sup> but an investigation by Giornale dello spettacolo indicated that film dramas had to make most of their money in that period. Rosi's film is no exception. By the end of December 1963, it had grossed over 230 million of its 300 million lire income.<sup>77</sup> It



did remain on the film club and art cinema circuits where it was accorded some importance<sup>78</sup>. Le mani sulla città won the 1963 Golden Lion at the XXIV Venice Film Festival, its presence in competition and its prize therefore demanding that it be considered seriously. Critical reaction at the time varied with the political persuasion of the publication concerned. Those on the left praised Rosi for his courage in denouncing politicians who felt they had rights over the city they were supposed to represent. Those on the centre-right and right criticised the film for being journalism rather than cinema. Both camps therefore took account of the innovations in its form, even if there was no agreement as to its formal effectiveness. Some critics on the left, such as Lino Micciché, criticised the film for being too conventional in form, others identified its narrative weaknesses (characterization, situations, events) as strengths in its argumentation<sup>79</sup>. We will return to these ideas later.

After the relative lack of success of Le mani sulla città, the opportunity to mount a co-production was a logical step. The advantages outlined by Guback have an overwhelming logic - (a) a broader base of financial investment, (2) the assurance of two or more home markets, with the consequent advantages of eligibility for 'national' exhibition quotas, and prizes, (3) a dual basis for calculating subsidies, and (significantly) last (4) the inclusion of a greater range of stars, artistic and technical personnel without endangering the nationality of the film.<sup>80</sup>

Rosi had been thinking of a film on the music business when a photo reportage of the Pamplona festival caught his eye. He

proposed a film on bullfighting to Angelo Rizzoli who suggested that he try it out. This entailed taking a small crew to Spain to shoot material on festivals and bullfights which, when edited to 45 minutes and set to music, was enough to set the bigger project in motion.<sup>81</sup> In 1964, gambling that the expense of this preparation would pay off would not have saddled the eventual production with enormous costs. This was not the case in 1985 when Rosi went to Colombia to plan and choose locations for Cronaca di una morte annunciata.

The most popular genres at the time were costume dramas, dramatic and episodic films. Rosi's film would fit in with market needs, with the added attraction of its exotic location<sup>82</sup>.

Il momento della verità (1964), like Mani, was exploited rapidly, making over 269 million lire in the first 10 months after its release in 1965.<sup>83</sup> It was widely sold abroad, although with different distribution patterns to avoid confrontation with animal rights groups!<sup>84</sup> Critical reaction was generally favourable, although some thought that some sort of self-censorship had operated which robbed the film of a more overt political message<sup>85</sup>. The fact that it was Rosi's first film in colour suggests another reason for the avoidance of risk.

The film industry at this time was having to beat off the usual challenge from energetically marketed American films, such as wide-screen spectacles, and from the competition that the increasing number of television sets brought. Ironically, the Legge Corona of 1965, which aimed to spread the rewards of quality more widely among those responsible for

production and creative contributions, thus encouraging continued 'quality' productions, presented the industry with yet more dilemmas. The temptation was to go with market imperatives for a quick exploitation of a film. The rewards for a quality film were slower to come - public taste was seen to be slow to evolve<sup>86</sup> - the tax relief, subventions to the production team, and the 20 prizes of 40 million lire each, depended on a film's being designated 'quality', but at some future date. Nonetheless, there were now enough art films in circulation to support the development of alternative art house cinemas, the cinema d'essai, where they could be exhibited. And we can see that the Legge Corona was effective in encouraging producers to identify certain directors and creative workers who would be likely to deliver the product necessary to qualify for these attractive financial incentives.

We saw earlier how Rosi's collaborators' careers tended towards identification in this way. Rosi's career from 1958 would tend to place him in this category. His films had been awarded prizes for their quality. Salvatore Giuliano had been called a masterpiece. Prizes for photography are significant. Rosi's films have the 'look' of quality - carefully composed and shot, privileging the realist style which is associated with intellectual and personal commitment. Like Visconti, with whom his work was very early compared, he also developed bravura set pieces, which would display his skill as director and narrator, and which would impress the spectator. Vito's murder in La sfida; the fight with the gypsies in I magliari; the roundup of the men of Montelepre and the revolt of their



women, the massacre of Portella della Ginestra in Salvatore Giuliano; the collapse of the tenement in Vicolo Sant'Andrea in Le mani sulla città; and the corrida scenes in Il momento della verità are examples.

However, Rosi's career at this stage also shows that financial pressures are difficult to ignore. His first three films had been successful, his last two less so. In order to continue making the films he wanted, he would next have to make a film which made money.

Carlo Ponti wanted to make a film with Sophia Loren and suggested La monaca di Monza to Rosi. Visconti however, had an interest in that, so Rosi turned instead to Tonino Guerra's proposal to film a fairy story, proposing an adaptation of those of the Neapolitan, G B Basile.<sup>87</sup> Inevitably -

"Purtroppo il piacere di misurarmi con quel mondo è stato in parte avvelenato da una continua e sorda polemica con il produttore Ponti il quale voleva che io facessi un tipo di film diverso da quello che avevo in mente.

... Ciò che trovo sbagliato nel ragionamento di alcuni produttori è la convinzione che un prodotto, per essere internazionale, dovrebbe escludere elementi culturali regionali, che secondo me invece sono elementi autentici che fanno un prodotto autentico."<sup>88</sup>

Ponti's preoccupations resulted from pressures associated with the large injection of money from the American coproduction deal. The film had to be made in colour, in scope, using stars. MGM marketed it as a love story, "Cinderella - Italian Style" ("Sophia! Omar! Terrific together as the peasant girl and the prince who tames her!"). Small wonder that critics did not really know what to make of it. Apart from the fact that the British version was badly dubbed, critics seemed to frantically search for a message underneath the charming

pictures.<sup>89</sup> It was, however, extremely successful financially, coming 8th in the national listings (Lire 1,232,130.000).<sup>90</sup>

Interestingly we have in C'era una volta an example of the strength of a producer prevailing over that of a director. Ponti represented a channel for US co-production finance. The production took the shape of a star package and a fairytale love story, rather than the evocation of Neapolitan folk tales, which offered the possibility of a social and ideological reading. The folk tale or fable, like the epic, was not regarded by Italian critics as a serious genre, and Rosi's film appeared to be redeemed only if traces of realism could be discerned. The tension between the necessity of treating Rosi as a serious director (on the basis of his previous career) and the difficulty of reconciling this with a Ponti fairy tale, produced some odd, and generally negative critical reviews.

The financial success of C'era una volta was, however, an indication that Rosi could deliver a film which responded to public taste for clear narratives, stars, and visual splendour.

Rosi's career includes short stints in the theatre, and projects which he has had in mind for years and which have been temporarily abandoned. We have seen a pattern emerging of his adroit manipulation of existing structures and social practices in the industry in order to continue as a filmmaker. We will now go on to examine his career in the context of a period which should have been more conducive to his ideas.

### PHASE 3: After the revolution

If we look at the films Francesco Rosi has made since 1968, we can see that their history enables us to distinguish four phases in the development of the Italian film industry. It also provides some explanation as to how a filmmaker like Rosi has been able to survive in a dire market situation. It also provides some insights into changes in Rosi's artistic preoccupations.

The groups of demonstrators who occupied the State-owned Istituto Luce, and the prestigious film school, the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in 1968, centred their demands around greater artistic freedom and better working conditions. Greater artistic freedom was identified with complete reform of the State's arms of the cinema industry - the producer, l'Istituto Luce; the distributor Italoaleggio, and the financier, the Banco Nazionale di Lavoro. This was a natural enough ideal in the face of aggressive US marketing and a native industry, the majority of whose products jump on the most easily identifiable bandwagons, or rely on formulaic genre products.

In common with the situation outside the film industry, the directors of these State concerns were political appointments. Those whose appointments resulted from the centre-left coalition found Christian Democrat appointees firmly in control. The next 4 years were taken up with the reform of the State cinema apparatus and provision for its more active role in promoting Italian culture and films of quality. The immediate result in the early 1970s was an interesting crop of innovative and political films. At this point, around 1972, some new directors made their début. This one would expect.



This impetus was certainly not, however, followed up by the establishment of channels by which political films could easily be made.

As we have shown, the 1960s were marked by the development of more rigid industrial models for the exploitation of films, one effect of which was to drive into unprofitability, and ultimately out of business, small production companies making cheap, genre products. We see a move towards co-production deals in order to hedge risks and exploit two or more markets. The period also shows the consolidation of the art film sector. Although numerically a very small area of Italian production, its influence on the level of formal experimentation and subject matter was not inconsiderable. Political or authorial filmmaking was, however, still a risky business if critical acclaim was not matched by some sort of financial success.

In the period 1967-71 we can see some trends developing. Firstly we see directors who have started out in low-budget, personal and political cinema, often using avant garde forms, making a move into the mainstream of film production, and having to adapt their creative vision accordingly. Elio Petri made this move with A ciascuno il suo in 1967, the same year that C'era una volta was released. Petri's cinematography is interesting and the film was a moderate success, but it is significant that he needed a book adaptation to make the jump into big budget production. More indicative is the case of Bertolucci who experienced a period of despair at the critical and financial failure of Partner (1968). Bertolucci later justified his abandonment of the strategies of Godard as a

move towards a more adult relationship with the audience and a rejection of "a masochistic streak in making films that nobody wanted to watch and that the audience would ultimately reject, in the way it knows best (with their feet)".<sup>91</sup> Strategia del ragno (1970) was based on a Borges novella and was one of the first batch of films made with RAI television money with a theatrical release in mind. A critical success, Bertolucci followed it with Il conformista (1970), and then in 1972 with Ultimo Tango a Parigi. The huge international success of Ultimo Tango a Parigi, like Fellini with La dolce vita (1960) and Rosi with Salvatore Giuliano (1961) before him, took Bertolucci into an area of production where he could command large budgets, acclaimed technicians and stars and yet still address "serious" themes, for an international audience. Ironically, the move into this sector of the industry, originally motivated by frustration at having to wait four years between projects, usually necessitates meticulous planning on just this time scale between films!

Secondly, the financial returns of those filmmakers who between 1967-1970 remained in the alternative, Godardian, mode of film making generally reflected their limited production investment. The films of Ferreri, the Taviani brothers' Sovversivi (1967) and Sotto il segno dello scorpione (1969), Orsini's I dannati della terra (1969) had some critical consideration, but their distribution and exhibition caused problems. Regular articles appear in the trade press commenting on the response of the public to "film impegnati" in the different exhibition sectors<sup>92</sup>. Rosi had never operated in this area and to do so would not even be a step

backwards to reclaim his political past.

Much more meaningful to Rosi would be the third trend, typified by Visconti and Fellini at its apex, but with imitators at other levels of production (Bellocchio, Damiani, Petri, Maselli, Bolognini). Visconti had used the melodrama (family and historical) and the epic to explore political themes and ideas. Fellini's equally spectacular films depended for their marketing strategy on the link between film and 'author', and the valorizing of the psychology and creative impulse of the artist as an outsider, licenced to comment on society. The fact that both Antonioni and Pasolini were moving into international, often foreign language, co-productions, was an indication of the increasing ability of ideas and works of art to cross European borders. The student demonstrations and workers' occupation of factories in France in 1968 had influences all over Europe, if not manifested in similar events, at least in the feeling that the examination of institutions and power blocs was licensed. However, as Lino Micciché has shown in his analysis of the synopses of the 2,000 or so films produced in Italy between 1969 and 1978, in this period there existed no intermediate zone between the 10% or so 'quality' (in the sense of well made films which do not offend public taste) films, and a "zona bassa" of badly made and/or erotic films<sup>93</sup>. Furthermore, he suggests that there is very little cultural contact between categories of production in the film industry. This statement is interesting because, as we have shown earlier, this was not the case for Rosi and his collaborators during the early part of their careers. Our analysis shows that, by the late 1960s, Rosi,



Pasqualino De Santis, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Tonino Guerra had established their reputations and worked in that professionally competent part of the Italian industry which is designated as 'cinema di qualità'.

In the first period, in the immediate aftermath of 1968, and in the second phase in the mid 1970s, Rosi made 4 films.

In fact, between C'era una volta (1967) and Uomini contro (1969) Rosi planned two projects which never came to fruition, one around the character of Brutus, which never came together, and the other on Che Guevara, who had just died. The latter project failed to get off the ground due to bureaucratic delays in Havana, the fact that other films on Guevara were released, and the producer withdrew. Rosi therefore took the idea of filming Lussu's book, which had occurred to him whilst working on Brutus<sup>94</sup>.

Rosi has never found it particularly easy to attract finance for his films, mainly because of their subject matter. He had a long apprenticeship in the mainstream of the commercial industry before coming to direct his own films. His films have won critical acclaim, and prizes for their artistic and technical excellence. These last do not guarantee box office success and Rosi is very conscious of his responsibilities in this direction:-

"I hope my films will have a wide distribution, and if I expect a positive result, I must make them so that they can have this distribution... And of course film has always addressed itself to the mass; that is its function. By "positive result" I simply mean that it fulfills its function in that sense. It is destined to "arrive", and the man of the cinema must occupy himself with this - also commercial - arrival... how to make films that can carry serious thoughts but at the same time obtain wide circulation. In cinema the discovery of the

relationship between the creative origins of an idea and its creative expression is much more important than in the other arts. We must learn to relate the levels of creation with the levels of comprehension."<sup>95</sup>

The making of Rosi's only war film, Uomini contro, which was released in 1970, required more than usual determination. There have been very few Italian films about the first world war. Monicelli's La grande guerra (1959) is probably the best known. It is very different from Uomini contro, Monicelli's film being comic in tone - and even so it was criticized by the authorities. Not only had the fascists successfully built a myth around World War I as a war of national unity (setting the northern boundaries), but it also acquired a nostalgic reputation as a great victory.<sup>96</sup> Attempts to look objectively at WWI in the hard, postwar years were not encouraged by the censor. Rosi's film was based on a prestigious book - Un anno sull'altipiano - by Emilio Lussu<sup>97</sup> - but the Italian reading public has, until recently, never been considered large, in contrast to the film audience which has been considered as potentially more dangerous. Rosi therefore found difficulty getting finance for the film. Nervous independent producers shied away from the subject.<sup>98</sup> The State body, Italnoleggio took months to refuse help and the Istituto Luce, which was asked for technical help in return for a quota of the film rights, also refused.<sup>99</sup> US producers wanted an all-star, US cast and were not convinced that the subject of an Italian incident in WWI had international box office appeal. In the end, Rosi and his producer, Perugia, put their own money into the project, plus the guarantee from the distribution company, Euro, and arranged a coproduction with

Jadran films of Yugoslavia.<sup>100</sup> It had a very rough distribution deal, with a very short 1<sup>a</sup> visione run,<sup>101</sup> and no distribution abroad. Nonetheless it came about 37th in the national listings, making L 824,141.000 (it cost one miliardo). Euro films were in financial trouble and later went bankrupt. Rosi claims to have made no money from it at all and, interestingly, not to have been in a position to retain control of the rights for future exploitation by means of new technology.<sup>102</sup>

The film marked Rosi's first use of the actor Gian Maria Volonté, who by that time had become somewhat of an icon of the left-wing martyr and whose performances had attracted critical attention.<sup>103</sup>

Uomini contro's release allowed press attention to address a variety of issues. It was discussed as the adaptation of a book described as "un gioiello del nostro patrimonio letterario"<sup>104</sup> and Senator Lussu was mobilized to comment on Rosi's film<sup>105</sup> from the production phase onwards. The political agenda of the film excited much polemic and debate, fuelled by Rosi's contentions that the theme which had interested him was "l'ingiustizia di classe nella guerra", and that "Le uniche guerre giuste sono quelle scelte e proclamate dalla massa che deve combatterle: quindi le guerre rivoluzionarie."<sup>106</sup> The left wing press used the occasion for a consideration of the causes of World War I and how it was presented historically. Other articles stressed both the physical difficulties of filming and Rosi's artistic choices in his search for authenticity in recreating the period. At one point Rosi even brings in the name of Orson Welles as a



"witness" to the difficulties of working in colour.<sup>107</sup>

The film was presented at the Venice Film Festival which provided an important cultural forum for discussion of its strategies and ideas. Here it was, however, met with incomprehension and disappointment by many foreign cinema critics who wondered why Rosi had wanted to make it.<sup>108</sup>

The book on Uomini contro which was published in 1970 brought all these strands together by publishing not only the screenplay, but also chapters on the historical context of the war, the texts and photographs used by Rosi, Guerra and La Capria to establish historical authenticity and accuracy, and a "Colloquio con l'autore" in which Rosi gives personal biographical details as well as comments on his ideas and artistic choices.

Uomini contro marked Rosi's only excursion into production and the experience did not initiate a future pattern. We will see that Rosi continues to maximize artistic control and financial reward by directing and co-writing his films and working with a restricted group of collaborators. Only the young actor-producers have managed to combine the creative and organizational roles, but this path was not one open to Rosi.

In 1972 and 1973, Rosi's Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano were released. Both were produced by Franco Cristaldi and were co-productions with Vides as the main partner. They were distributed by Cinema International Corporation. Cadaveri eccellenti, which was released in 1975/76 was produced by Alberto Grimaldi, an Italian/French co-production, distributed by United Artists. All three were big budget products which did well at the box office.<sup>109</sup> The success of films like Elio

Petri's Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto (1970), Mauro Bolognini's Metello (1970), Montaldo's Sacco e Vanzetti and Pasolini's Decameron (both 1971) meant that financiers could see an identifiable market for political or art films. In fact, from 1970 onwards, the trade papers ran regular articles assessing the popularity of 'film d'impegno', vigorously refuting accusations that producers were unwilling to back serious films.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time the US industry appeared to be going through a crisis, exporting fewer films and not giving them good publicity, thus allowing Italian audiences to satisfy their taste for drama with Italian films.

Il caso Mattei, Lucky Luciano and Cadaveri eccellenti all use the inchiesta form - the investigation or enquiry. The first two were the result of researches by Rosi and his collaborators, and the latter being the adaptation of a successful book, Sciascia's Il contesto. Producers were wary of book adaptations, since the Italian reading public was not large, but recognized that it could, by this means, draw on a double level of interest and industrial activity.<sup>111</sup>

The use of the enquiry mode is extremely significant. At its most mundane and pecuniary level it allows Rosi to partake of a popular literary and cinematic form which will be readily intelligible to financiers, who are able to evaluate the financial appeal of a recognizable genre format, albeit in a minor variation, that of the conspiracy thriller. On the other hand, it satisfies Rosi's political and artistic intentions - detective fiction has not been a stranger to more metaphysical enquiries about the nature of justice, or of

crime, and the relationship between the individual and society. We will return to a discussion of Rosi's use of the enquiry in the next Chapter.

Il caso Mattei was released in February 1972 and had such a good 1<sup>a</sup> visione run that it prompted several articles in the trade press, analyzing and comparing its success to that of Petri's La classe operaia va in paradiso (1971).<sup>112</sup> Rosi's film did very well in the south. Whereas Rosi's film was once again an analysis of a past situation, albeit with repercussions in the present, Bertolucci's Ultimo tango a Parigi returned to the present. The latter film made Lire 5,758,920,000, matching Coppola's The Godfather. Lina Wertmuller's Mimì metallurgico ferito nell'onore was also a political film, but used the comedy genre to investigate contemporary gender relations. It found a response with the public of Lire 2,650,578,000. However, it was US distributors who enjoyed the icing on the market, making more with their 52 films than all the Italian national and regional distributors made combined with their 158 films.<sup>113</sup>

Il caso Mattei won the Palme d'Or at the 1972 Cannes Film Festival, a cultural event which would ensure that it received press consideration, even if its subject matter did not still retain something of the controversial. Since it was also Rosi's 8th film, many critics took the opportunity to review his work and to compare it to Salvatore Giuliano.<sup>114</sup>

Like Uomini contro, Il caso Mattei was discussed in the press not only by film critics, but also by well-known journalists and cultural critics - it was the subject of two "tavole rotonde", one in L'Espresso and one in Tempo.<sup>115</sup> There was



much debate about Rosi's fascination with the central figure of Mattei and whether he should have used Brechtian distancing devices rather than attempt an evocation of the historical figure through Volonté's performance. In each interview Rosi stresses his use of televisual and press sources, and his interviews with witnesses, in his recreation of Mattei's life. Difficulties are also mentioned, "reticenze, molte porte chiuse; mi sono imbattuto in molta gente che preferiva far cadere l'argomento."<sup>116</sup>

Moreover, the film was distributed by CIC. For those who enjoyed conspiracy theories, Andrew Sarris pointed out the irony of a film politically opposed to the tactics of US oil companies being distributed by the movie arm of Gulf and Western, which perhaps explained its poor publicity campaign in the USA.<sup>117</sup>

Interest in the film was such to permit Rosi and Scalfari to publish the documentation on which the screenplay was based, together with the script and a long interview with Rosi. The latter covers events in his career, his work methods, the genesis of the Mattei project, the tracing of continuity of themes over his career.<sup>118</sup>

Lucky Luciano was made quickly after Il caso Mattei and formed part of a wave of mafia films. Police and gangster films were popular genres at the box office. Lucky Luciano had a good 1<sup>a</sup> visione release in a wide spread of "città capozona" and it rewarded its distributors.

The trade press continued to monitor the fate of "film difficili", coming to the surprised conclusion that difficult films could have success even without stars, provided that

they had an interesting subject and a good script.<sup>119</sup> It was noticed that a large number of them had considerable budgets, and were not produced by any "alternative" sector of the industry. These included Rosi's two films, as well as Fellini Satyricon (1969), Petri's Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto (1970), Montaldo's Sacco e Vanzetti (1971), Bertolucci's Il conformista (1970), etc. It was also noted that some of them had been picked up by US distributors. CIC distributed Il caso Mattei and Il conformista; Dear took on Luchino Visconti's Morte a Venezia (1971); Ceiad Columbia Eriprando Visconti's Il caso Pisciotta (1972); and United Artists Europa Bertolucci's Ultimo tango a Parigi (1972).<sup>120</sup> Rosi's films were therefore firmly within a successful, artistically and thematically serious, area of mainstream Italian cinema, whose potential for international earnings was recognized.

The importance of Rosi's mafia theme was recognized by lengthy articles and interviews in the weekly press, which foregrounded the links between legal and illegal power. One article, discussing the basis of Siragusa and Anslinger's remarks that they chase Luciano, Kefauver chases Dewey and "when all this is over, everyone will find himself back at the same goddamned place where he started", concluded with the prophetic remarks,

"... se i rapporti di potere stanno, come stanno, in questi termini, non è assolutamente possibile credere all'efficacia delle lotte contro il potere illegale. Questo sarebbe possibile soltanto se il potere legale fosse realmente nelle mani della gente del popolo. ... Il fatto è, ho finito col persuadermi, che la mafia costituisce la garanzia di rispettabilità del sistema e il sistema le corrisponde per tale "servizio" un prezzo che

paghiamo tutti, e più caro lo paga chi è assolutamente ignaro."<sup>121</sup>

The film was widely reviewed. Generally, critical reaction was favourable to the theme, although unsure about the film's genre and central character. Once again, critics outside Italy accorded it considerable importance - Positif accorded it a lengthy dossier in January 1974, with a discussion of Rosi's sources. An extensive collection of documentation and photographs on which Rosi based his screenplay was also published at the time, and also contained a lengthy introduction in which Rosi delineates his interest in uncovering the links between legal and illegal power in all his films.<sup>122</sup>

We have already mentioned the role of television in one of Bertolucci's productions and the most interesting developments with the most far reaching consequences were taking place in this audiovisual field in this period. Morrione has shown that the occupations of RAI premises, strikes and calls for change were but the start of a period (1969-1976) of intense political activity with the aim of reforming State television organization and putting its finances on a firm footing. The eventual law, approved on 26 March 1975, disappointed those calling for reform. It was felt that the role of public television had not been thought through in a wider context than the current political arena and that the foundations for "lottizzazione" had been laid. Morrione also shows the entry of large Italian industrial concerns into all the sectors of the cultural industries during this period, a development with profound consequences in the 1980s<sup>123</sup>, when RAI would find



powerful interests ranged against it. These political battles would, of course influence what sort of programmes were made, or not made.

In the rest of this section we will briefly examine developments in the area of television which were to have consequences for Rosi's career. In his history of Italian television, Aldo Grasso makes the point that mass media institutions should not be considered as fixed entities but organisms in a continual state of evolution. He identifies a move from a model (in the 1950s and early 1960s) where television used old cinema productions indiscriminately to fill its schedules to a model (in the late 1960s and early 1970s) where cinema was regarded as an art form superior to television. Cinema became a cultural event on television. "I film espressivamente più significativi della storia del cinema" were chosen and presented in seasons arranged around directors, themes, schools, screenwriters, actors, and interpreted by a growing army of critics.<sup>124</sup> These developments are significant in the context of agreements between RAI and bodies representing sectors of the cinema industries regulating acquisition costs and criteria for transmission in that the concerns of entertainment and the film club were being validated.

Grasso identifies a third phase (1970s and early 1980s) as one of "respectful substitution", where television seeks to combat crises in the cinema industry by producing films which would have a conventional cinematic release as well as televisual transmission. The projects chosen were those of established directors - Fellini's I clowns and Bertolucci's Strategia del ragno in 1970 for example, from the 'quality' or 'art' film

end of production, culminating in the 1978 Cannes Film Festival awards to the Taviani's Padre Padrone and Olmi's L'Albero degli zoccoli.

Whilst RAI finance did allow a very small number of films to be made, its move into production did not affect structural problems in the distribution sector. The poor box office returns of I clowns and La strategia del ragno show not only the lack of thought to publicity in an unfamiliar market, but also that 'quality' production had a precarious place in the Italian distribution sector.<sup>125</sup>

RAI also made other cultural interventions. Notable in this period are the presence of over 40 hours of television directed by Roberto Rossellini, and the prestigious series of "Film sperimentali" on RAI 2 which launched the careers of several young filmmakers. Perhaps Rosi's success, financially and critically, with Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano effectively kept him in a narrow area of cinematic production until industrial developments forced closer relationships with television.

In 1975/76 the situation of the Italian film industry was rather better than at any other time since 1968 but there were signs of serious structural problems. Although production had increased, the number of spectators dropped 11.5% in 1975. The general economic situation and the growth of private television stations were given as reasons.<sup>126</sup> Of the 560 new films in circulation in 1976, 203 were 100% Italian, 34 were co-productions and 323 were foreign (of which 144 were US). Only 22% of the 560 made over Lire 500,000.000, and a substantial number (262) did not make more than Lire

100,000.000. Difficulties the industry had to contend with were defined as increased production costs, tight credit at high costs, the limited size of the market, difficulties in exporting and lack of forward planning in the sector. These difficulties are given an added perspective when one finds that, in 1976, there were actually 8,799 films in circulation in Italy (56% of which were foreign). The 560 new films contributed to 53.7% of cinema receipts, ie. little more than 201 milliard lire.<sup>127</sup> Although different types of cinema cater for different products, the market as a whole was inadequate to absorb all the films in circulation. It has been claimed that, in 1975/76, 60-70% of Italian and foreign films took more than 60% of their total takings in the first two weeks of release and that high production costs had led to a loss of production and commercial autonomy, and to an increasingly standardized product.<sup>128</sup> Comparison of statistics of production costs<sup>129</sup> also shows a tendency to produce more films at the cheaper end of the market (ie. costing less than Lire 300,000.000), thus avoiding competition with imported US blockbusters (these included Jaws). Most of the Italian films produced came under the category of 'amusement', ie. firstly comedies, then adventures and genre films, "uno dei cardini della produzione media filmista".<sup>130</sup> US successes were dramas, plus Disney's Cinderella.<sup>131</sup> The production values of Rosi's films are not those of the cheaper end of the market. They therefore have to compete with US dramas on the 1<sup>a</sup> visione circuits. In this context, the fact that Cadaveri eccellenti was not only an adaptation of a prestigious book, but also a genre film, is



significant.<sup>132</sup> The film was marketed as a standard 1<sup>a</sup> visione product and came 16th in the year's charts.<sup>133</sup>

The film aroused considerable controversy both on the right and left of the political spectrum. The main focus of the controversy was the final sequence, where the Revolutionary Party official refuses to tell the true story of Rogas' death, on the grounds that the ensuing disturbances might provoke military intervention. He ends with a paraphrase of Gramsci's statement, with "La verità non è sempre rivoluzionaria" - which provoked a storm of protest from the left. Most left-wing critics saw this as an attack on the role of the communist party.<sup>134</sup>

Whether criticism centred on differences between Rosi's film and Sciascia's book, or on philosophical problems of the Left, the scores of newspaper articles alone reveal that Cadaveri eccellenti touched a raw nerve. On 27 April 1976 it was even denounced for "offence to institutions of the State" by the then Procurator of the Republic at the Rome Tribunal. The subject matter has ensured that the film is regularly re-shown, and that it is also considered in literary arenas when Sciascia's work is assessed.<sup>135</sup> The film won a 1975-6 David di Donatello for its producer, Alberto Grimaldi, and for Rosi's direction; the XXIV Premio Saint Vincent Golden Cup to Rosi for his direction; and a special prize at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival for the best film not in competition.

Cadaveri eccellenti is interesting as a case study because, although it shows Rosi in control of his role as serious director, allied with a producer of quality films<sup>136</sup>, there is a suggestion that only Rosi's prestige enabled the film to

be made since the "filone politico" was all but finished.<sup>137</sup>

In short, analysis of the Italian film industry post-1968 suggests firstly the consolidation of a modern commercial film industry, and secondly, that its reaction to economic crisis was varied and had no coherent strategy.

Statistics suggest that, each year, the industry's profits increased, but these went to a smaller number of films and to a smaller number of producers. Protests have masked what has really been happening. The industry has polarized. Power and control have increasingly fallen into the hands of the larger production and distribution companies which dominate the market. In their constant search for formulae for success, they control the types of films made.

Francesco Rosi works in the area of the market controlled by large companies with international interests. As we have shown, his films in this phase have an effective distribution abroad, where they their critical reception is also favourable. This in turn ensures that they will be sold for broadcast to companies other than the original co-producers, and will reach a wide audience internationally. The alternative is shoestring political cooperative filmmaking, or cheap genre products. Rosi's mode of expression may be his own, but his subjects have a commercial exchangeability.

#### PHASE 4: Losing the war with television

The next phase of development has its roots in the first two. It is characterized by the growth of competition from television and the effect of the consequent changes in social habits. Since the first terrorist bombs in 1972, and with more urban crime since the mid-1970s, fewer people go out at

night; more stay in and watch television.

Since 1968 private television channels have proliferated in Italy. The last twenty years have, therefore, been characterized by an accommodation with television, but the relationship has been ambivalent. Cinema has blamed television for robbing it of audiences, whilst relying on the sale of tv rights to supplement the inadequacies of the cinema distribution market.<sup>138</sup> In addition, by the late 1970s, US direct investment in Italian film production had decreased and, to fill the vacuum, films have increasingly been made with television as a co-production partner.

To look at the problem from another angle - although public and private television stations draw increasingly large audiences in this period,<sup>139</sup> they consume large numbers of films and are said to depress the price offered for Italian films. That the public were interested in Italian films can be seen from the fact that when private television stations sought to break the commanding position of RAI's Monday evening schedule in the early 1980s, they did it by showing Italian productions rather than any other nationality.<sup>140</sup>

Rosi's fifth film since 1968, Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (1979), was produced by Franco Cristaldi as a co-production for Vides/Action films (France), Gaumont France and RAI 2. RAI put up 50% of the production costs.<sup>141</sup> It was made in two versions, one for the cinema, and a 4-part television version. Filmed in Spring 1978, it was released in Italy in February 1979, France and Germany in May 1979, but in the USA and UK only in April/May 1982 after the success of Tre fratelli, and coinciding with the republication of Levi's book.



Eboli is, of course, an adaptation of another prestigious book, by Carlo Levi. Tullio Kezich, who followed the stages of production of Salvatore Giuliano, suggests that Rosi had Eboli in mind as a future project at that time.<sup>142</sup> The Mezzogiorno has been a constant preoccupation of Rosi's since his first film in 1958, but Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Tre fratelli (1981) mark a move towards a more lyrical and emotional exploration of the reality of southern Italy.

Rosi also claims to have had the idea of filming Eboli from the time when Carlo Levi visited the shooting of Salvatore Giuliano and suggested that he undertake the project.<sup>143</sup> He even goes so far as to suggest that authorial approval was gained in competition with other "registi famosi, italiani e stranieri" and on the basis of his treatment of the reality of the south.<sup>144</sup> There had been several announcements over the years that it would be filmed but producers generally shied away from it; Argentieri attributes this to the fact that the book "parlasse del Mezzogiorno d'Italia senza sfoggio di macchietismo dialettale e di melodramma".<sup>145</sup> This would not be a problem for television channels for whom the adaptation of classics of Italian and foreign literature was a staple genre.

Eboli did very well at the box office especially in its first run.<sup>146</sup> It also had a wide release. Statistics show that only 29.7% of its ticket sales came from release in the città capozona. In this respect it shows a similar profile to Olmi's L'Albero degli zoccoli with only 24.6%. What is interesting is that it is listed as the fifth most popular dramatic film, making about half the returns of Olmi's

L'Albero degli zoccoli but with 40% of the latter film's number of days of programming, suggesting that we can see the beginning of a trend (for certain films only, mainly of the 'quality' genre) towards a lengthening of the exploitation period<sup>147</sup>. It is possible that Cristo si è fermato a Eboli would have had an even greater success with a longer 1<sup>a</sup> visione run<sup>148</sup>. Here it is significant that both Olmi and Rosi's films concerned rural life. They formed part of the groundswell of public nostalgia for a past, peasant existence. However, although made with and for television, Eboli was publicized in a typically pre-televisual way. The film was chosen for a non-competition screening at the Cannes Film Festival, where Rosi took part in a special conference on "Creazione e tecnica" with Kazan and Comencini. He was also the subject of a special day event where three of his early films were shown, followed by a televised debate.<sup>149</sup> Here we see not only that the director's name is important, but that the industry also gives importance to technical expertise in mainstream production. It is also evidence of how the producer, television, is prepared to use these structures in its own publicity.

Rosi was extensively interviewed during the production and post-production phases, at the time of the film's cinema release, during the Cannes Film Festival, and at the time of Eboli's first broadcast shortly after an earthquake devastated the region. The press book mentions that there were also two television programmes which included material on the shooting of Eboli.<sup>150</sup> Although many Italian and foreign critics reproached Rosi for abandoning original, political cinema,

articles and reviews do engage in extensive debate on the "problema del Mezzogiorno", the undervaluing of peasant culture, Levi's work, Rosi's adaptation, aims and themes. Even critics who felt that Rosi had abandoned his critical cutting edge recognized the successful cinematic transposition of certain episodes of the book and the seductive visual quality of the film. It is interesting to see at this point that, whilst Rosi is orchestrating the media in the way that we have seen him do in the past, the success of his film is very firmly tied to the fame of Levi's book.<sup>151</sup>

Tre fratelli, released in 1981, was also a co-production of Iter film (Rome) with Gaumont France, and with distribution agreements with RAI, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen and ORF Vienna. Although Michele Placido had acted in a financially successful film before,<sup>152</sup> the film had only a patchy success in Italy. It was more popular in 1<sup>a</sup> visione, where it had to make over 60% of its takings.<sup>153</sup> Tre fratelli was widely exported and did well abroad, both critically and financially, its distributors recognizing that its success could be attributed to its profile as a quality product<sup>154</sup>. It was chosen to open the Cannes Film Festival, critical reactions being influenced by the fact that this took place an hour or so after the assassination attempt on the Pope. It was generally agreed that Rosi's serious yet lyrical film was an entirely appropriate choice.

Tre fratelli was critically more successful than Eboli in that it excited a greater range of opinions in proportion to the issues with which it deals. Critics praised the film, for example, for choosing to take up the issue of terrorism and



for Rosi's successful treatment of a complex plot which moves constantly from the personal to the political. Once again, the film's release and selection to open the Cannes Film Festival provoked articles which attempted to place it within the context of Rosi's work, and to debate the issues of emigration from the Mezzogiorno. Interestingly the press book promises the examination of universal themes - "life, death, loneliness, the old and eternal values that we all carry within ourselves and the forces which threaten them;" and these were certainly as much discussed in the press as Rosi's venture into contemporary issues. In fact the treatment of the personal side of the equation was widely regarded as the most successful part of the film, at least one critic mentioning that the issues were of the sort widely debated in the press, if not on television.<sup>155</sup>

The trade press reveals a recognition that the mass audience for film now had their desires satisfied by television. Commercial television grew by leaps and bounds in this period and was held responsible for further losses in the cinema audience. So voracious was the demand for films on commercial television that hundreds of old films were sold for broadcast, their directors having little control over how they were shown, and often no recompense at all. However, although television was increasingly a partner in the production package, problems arose when quality, art films were shown on commercial television channels. Rosi was amongst a group of directors and writers who asked for Article 20 of Law 633 to be applied, whereby authors could deny paternity of a work which had been mutilated - by advertisements in this case. In

a situation of rapid change and development in the televisual sector, the director had little power.

Carmen, which came out in 1984, was a co-production of Gaumont France and its music wing, Opéra Film Produzione. However, given that the 1982 Doxa Enquiry into cinema audiences typified the regular cinema-goer as northern, upper to middle class, young, male and well educated, the choice of an opera project in 1984 is not so surprising.<sup>156</sup>

In this phase of his career, then, we see that Rosi has survived by ensuring television distribution rights. Equally significant is the presence of Gaumont.<sup>157</sup>

Carmen appears at first untypical. Daniel Toscan Du Plantier described it as a typical Gaumont product - art allied to commerce. Opera has an international appeal; the audio and the visual aspect of filmed opera allow a double exploitation of the film as product, and the record as product.<sup>158</sup> It was subsequently marketed as a successful sell-through video cassette. Rosi's two previous films had been made with Gaumont and they had both done well - if not in Italy, at least internationally.<sup>159</sup> Both films had won awards - Eboli a first prize at the 1979 Moscow Film Festival, the 1979 Cervi prize to Bonacelli and a 1979 David di Donatello prize to Rosi as director; Tre fratelli was nominated for an Oscar. Rosi was therefore validated as capable of delivering a complex, visually splendid film with international appeal. Carmen in fact had a phenomenal success outside Italy and was rumoured to have saved the fortunes of Gaumont France.

One of the interesting cultural phenomena of the 1980s was the growth of interest in all forms of opera. Italy did, of

course, have much success in exporting opera films in the Silent film period, and in the 1940s, but opera films now constitute a definable genre of their own. They are successful financially on their first runs and have a virtually infinite shelf life amongst 'opera buffs', in the same way that classic vinyl or compact disc recordings have. Paradoxically, television has been the catalyst here by showing complete, unabridged opera performance, and by the use of opera as background music for television commercials. Allsop<sup>160</sup> claims that the renaissance started around 1981. Beineix' Diva had a considerable cult following in the UK, with successful album sales. It was noticed that opera audiences were getting younger and bigger and, being visually (or at least televisually) literate, were able to appreciate the constantly changing spectacle and emotional charge of opera.

The 1977 Doxa Enquiry provides other contextual indications to enable us to understand Rosi's continuing activity in the cinema industry. The Doxa Enquiry collected information about the cinema audience, what it watched and what it wanted, and published the results in the early 1980s. The Enquiry found that, far from being a popular art form, only 6% of the population surveyed admitted to going to the cinema in the last 6 months, and that 50% of these were middle class or upper class. Nine out of 10 Italians, however, watch films on TV.<sup>161</sup>

Rosi's films in this period were exploited as 1<sup>a</sup> visione products. The power of the producer and distributor (and with Gaumont the two coincided in certain areas) meant the



imposition of a certain product profile - bankable stars, such as Gian Maria Volonté, Lea Massari, François Simon, Irene Papas and Alain Cuny in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli; Philippe Noiret, Charles Vanel, Vittorio Mezzogiorno and Michele Placido in Tre fratelli; opera stars Placido Domingo and Ruggero Raimondi, and a singer (Julia Migenes Johnson) who combined opera with television and cabaret work in Carmen. The presence of Gaumont in the production arrangements also dictated a certain look to the films, and a respectability of theme or subject, both of which Rosi is well able to deliver. Rosi's reputation and the subject matter of the films have meant the continued presence of these films on the 2<sup>a</sup> visione/cinema d'essai circuit.

Carmen was released in the same period as the blockbusters Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, Police Academy, and C'era una volta in America but its comprehensive circulation in 11 città capozona and long 1<sup>a</sup> visione run meant that it climbed into the statistics of box office successes. Between September and December it was consistently listed between 17th and 24th in the popularity lists each week.<sup>162</sup>

Carmen is significant economically in Rosi's career because it encapsulates the trends we have identified previously. Firstly, the film was a minority co-production with France where its audience appeal was so great that it played in theatres at premium ticket prices<sup>163</sup> and had a phenomenal success, reaching number 10 in the charts. We have limited our study to the context of the Italian film industry but from this period on, Rosi's films have to be considered as international phenomena. Carmen's release in France, six months in

advance of its Italian release and showing at the Venice Biennale, allowed the orchestration in Italy of press reports of its success. Although Rosi is not listed amongst the Italian directors whose films made more than Lire 3 miliardi in the period January 1981 to 30 March 1984<sup>164</sup>, the international success of his films ensured him a continuing place in the Italian industry.

Secondly we see the consolidation of his place in the prestige sector of production. Rosi claimed to have had the idea of filming Mérimée's Carmen whilst shooting Il momento della verità in Spain and to have included Bizet in his preparations<sup>165</sup>. Many of the articles about the film concentrate on Rosi's work as interpreter/translator of the opera text to the screen. There is much stress on his three years' work of selecting locations, actors, artistic choices in filming singers performing and on his opinions of previous productions. The meticulous nature of these preparations for a large-scale production inevitably give rise to comparisons with Visconti<sup>166</sup>, as do considerations of Rosi's use of naturalism and the melodramatic mode. Besides the stress on Rosi as author of his version of Carmen, there is an emphasis on the entertainment value of the film, which is reflected in the enormous range of publications which review it. The film was launched at the same time as a boxed record of the score, and a videocassette was an integral part of the production arrangements.

Carmen also won prizes - 1985 David di Donatello awards to Rosi for best film and best director, Pasqualino De Santis for best cinematography, Enrico Job for screenplay and costumes,

Ruggero Mastroianni for editing. Rosi was also awarded the 1985 Premio Alitalia which was reserved for "l'autore che avrà ottenuto all'estero durante la stagione, un successo di rilievo, contribuendo a tenere alto il prestigio della cultura italiana". At this point Rosi is being recognized both as a cultural and an industrial institution.

These films were made at a time of exceptional growth and activity in the television sector resulting, as we have seen, in the consolidation of Berlusconi's networks. Clues to Rosi's success in co-productions with television lie in Grasso's typology of the characteristics of television in the 1980s - fragmentation, archaeology and "casalinghitudine".<sup>167</sup>

The episodic structure of Eboli and the shifts from present to past time in Tre fratelli lend themselves to broadcasting, where the viewer constantly has the power to zap between channels. They are not, however, innovative in form in the way that the work of filmmakers formed by RAI 2's L'altra domenica is. Nor are they for a young, cult audience.<sup>168</sup>

Whilst it is invidious to compare unlike genres, this example is used to suggest that, whereas Rosi's production conditions changed with the advent of financial partnerships with television, the "package" which he represented (quality direction, serious subjects and themes) did not. In this respect it fits with the "archaeological" characteristics of films on television. His appeal is to a nostalgic, cinefile audience to whom the fact that his language is pretelevsual is part of the charm of the viewing experience.

As we suggested at the beginning of this chapter, a director who achieves cultural recognition as an 'auteur', can use the



videocassette market to exploit his/her work, thus perpetuating their position in this category. "Casalinghitudine" represents the move from a public to a private viewing experience, "il film "consumato" come fosse un libro".<sup>169</sup> Rosi's films in this phase might appeal to the buying public on the basis of what Genette calls the hypotext - the book or opera on which the film is based - or on the basis of choice of director or subject.

Critical reaction to Rosi's films in this phase was mixed. As we have shown, Rosi's films have always attracted attention in a broad range of newspapers, journals and periodicals. Significantly his films have been discussed and debated not only in terms of their artistic merit, but also of their ideas and issues. Starting from La sfida and Salvatore Giuliano, we can observe a dual pattern in the primary and secondary texts. Rosi's films are produced as mainstream films in the entertainment industry, yet they use strategies to enhance the awareness of the spectator of other, political, realities. At the secondary level they are discussed in terms of artistic products and how successful they are in entertaining, and in communicating their ideas; and, at the same time, the films' production and release provide opportunities to raise questions for cultural debate in other media - the press and television. It is this space for cultural intervention which Rosi has found difficulty in mastering in the most recent phase of his activity.

#### PHASE 5: To sup with the Devil

Rosi's career since 1985 has been affected by trends identified in the foregoing sections, and by the Legge Lagorio

which became law in 1985/86. The aim of this legislation was a reform of State intervention in entertainment, ie. cinema, music, dance, circusses, with a common fund for all of them and quotas assigned to each. It aimed to revitalize the national cultural industries by providing tax shelter terms to investors, provided that reinvestment in technological updating, restructuring the industry and renewing cinemas took place. For the first time, television film production was included. This triggered announcements in 1986 that Silvio Berlusconi's Italia Uno and Rete Quattro would be producing films for the first time. The three RAI channels had all produced a significant number of films by the mid-1980s. Just over one fifth of the films produced were coproductions with television and 15% were adaptations of work originally generated in another medium.

The increasing cost of production is also an important factor in the future of a film. Carmine Cianfarani estimated that the cost of a 'good' film increased between 1979 and 1984 from Lire 350 million to Lire 1.5 miliardi.<sup>170</sup> Such costs inevitably destine the quality film to television coproduction and international production and distribution arrangements. In this way we can see the justice of Gianni Amelio's complaint that a director's options are predetermined by diminishing audiences and the marginalization of certain genres within the film production for the big screen.<sup>171</sup> The independently produced film has little place to go.

Analysis of trade press statistics shows that from 1985 onwards US films dominate the box office and distributors' charts. US blockbusters have longer 1<sup>a</sup> visione runs than

Italian films, at higher ticket prices, and appeal to the mass youth market identified by the Doxa enquiries. Italian films are only able to maintain any position in their own market by concentrating on typically national forms - comedies and sex films.<sup>172</sup> Distribution companies like Academy and Gaumont exploited the often profitable art film niche, but the industry found it very difficult to predict response at the box office. The trade paper, Giornale dello Spettacolo, has taken to a system of symbols indicating the warmth of reviews in key newspapers. The La Repubblica review appears to be particularly important for art or 'quality' films, since the 1987 Makno market research for Fice (Federazione italiana dei cinematografi d'essai) identified the 'strong' cinema-goer as well-educated, well-paid, and a high user of other media, especially that newspaper.<sup>173</sup> Academy got round the problem of estimating audience response by developing a star rating system to help exhibitors identify films which had already done well elsewhere; Gaumont's solution, as we have seen, was to use famous directors.

The trade press in this period monitors the success of different types of film very closely and it is possible to observe the evolution of a consciousness that a new genre, the 'quality' film, has emerged. Significantly for our study, this is no longer strictly identifiable with the "film impegnato" or the "film difficile", or even strictly with auteurist or 'art' cinema, but the dramatic subject matter and the presence of an "author" are identifying factors. Ferraù, for example, constantly falls back on Giovanni Grazzini's definitions of "quality" and "art", although these are rarely



totally apposite:-

"... quelle produzioni cinematografiche che, per la loro struttura narrativa, l'impostazione intellettuale e ideologico del regista, il taglio e la concatenazione delle sequenze (un esempio da ricordare Salvatore Giuliano di Francesco Rosi), si fanno considerare in partenza una operazione commerciale sbagliata (anche se i risultati spesso sono stati eccellenti)..... opere di particolare pregio culturale, non facilmente comprensibili dalle masse, supposte impreparate e di gusto rozzo.... film... scritti e diretti, se non anche prodotti, musicati, montati, ecc, dalla stessa persona... o, ogni film il cui autore abbia una tale personalità artistica e tale prestigio da potersi imporre come regista di opere da lui stesso scritte."<sup>174</sup>

Market research confirms that the public has changed, which explains to distributors and exhibitors patterns aberrant to the models devised twenty years before. Particularly hard to swallow, judging by articles in the trade press, seems to have been the success of foreign films of the 'quality' genre, such as Room With a View. In the 1950s and 1960s their distribution would have been limited to the art film circuit. The serious, art film has been absorbed into the category of the 'quality' film, the alternative being the low-budget, avant-garde film.

Costs were a determining factor in the production of Cronaca di una morte annunciata. The film had a complicated production history. It was postponed in 1984/85 when Gaumont Italia collapsed and was then financed by Italmedia, Soprofilm (Paris), Fociné (Bogota) and RAI 2. It was produced by Yves Gasser and Francis von Büren, the first of whom had coproduced Cristo si è fermato a Eboli. The preliminary location work in Colombia was a cost that had to be borne by subsequent production arrangements at a time when interest charges can form almost a third of the final production costs.<sup>175</sup> Since it was

a co-production, it was necessary to have actors of Italian, French and Colombian nationality. The film was produced in dubbed versions in English, French, Italian and Spanish, some of the actors dubbing themselves<sup>176</sup>. The film has little actual dialogue, relying on the images, looks and camera movements. Given the nature of the polyglot cast, such a script made a virtue of necessity but, even so, the dubbing process delayed the film's release. The original English version was dubbed with Caribbean voices, ignoring the class and race connotations of Caribbean accents. This version was rejected by Virgin films (the UK distributor) who eventually released it in the Spanish version with subtitles.

The film is an exploration - of personal relationships, of cultural relationships in a multicultural Caribbean society, and of the causes of violence within society. It is also another literary adaptation by an author, Gabriel García Márquez, who is internationally popular and the focus of a large industry. We have seen that this is a crucial factor by now in Rosi's career.

Television involvement in production influences not only patterns of a film's release, but also its format. It used to be the case that cinema films aimed to provide an experience which could not be duplicated on the small screen - hence the development of widescreen, cinemascope formats and dolby sound. Once the videocassette market started to grow in the US and UK, scope became less popular because it is only translated with difficulty onto video. By the time Rosi came to shoot Cronaca di una morte annunciata new processes had been developed and the film could be shot and developed in

different formats.<sup>177</sup> Industrial structures now have a very overt influence on form.

Cronaca was presented in competition at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival together with Memé Perlini's Cartoline italiane. Italian entries included Fellini's Intervista (also a RAI coproduction). Rosi's film started its 1<sup>a</sup> visione run in early May and in that month had the highest weekend returns of any film on release.<sup>178</sup> It was in competition with other films on Istituto Luce's listino, Olmi's Lunga vita alla signora! and the Tavianis' Good Morning Babilonia, both of which had made over Lire 1 miliardo by the end of the year. Cronaca was released in 24 cities making Lire 3,260,747,000 by the end of the 1986-87 season. By December, however, it had only managed to attract an additional 38,455 spectators and box office receipts of Lire 232,212,000.<sup>179</sup> Analysis of its distribution show that it was distributed "in depth" by L'Istituto Luce/Italnoleggio. Returns listed in "Borsa Film" in Giornale dello Spettacolo show that it had a relatively short (but average for a European film) 1<sup>a</sup> visione run of 3 months in the città capozona, but had a longer than average run in the città chiave etc of a full calendar year. Its reviews were very mixed<sup>180</sup>, perhaps revealing that negative publicity is better than no publicity at all.

Interestingly, whereas Rosi's films have always been discussed in relation to the ideas and issues they raise, we see with Carmen and Cronaca di una morte annunciata that the 'secondary text' consists of discussion of Rosi's adaptation, rather than consideration of the work as generated by Rosi, or the ideas motivating the narrative. Rosi claimed that Cronaca was not



successful and compared it to the similar case of Tre fratelli, which had distribution problems in Italy, blaming the distributors for launching it in May/June rather than in September.<sup>181</sup> Reviews after the film's release voice a general disappointment with Rosi's choice of actors and with the slow pace of the narrative progression. Rosi's often reiterated distance from his characters and refusal of psychology was interpreted as coldness and the sensual images of the Colombian countryside likened to tourist brochures or coffee advertisements.<sup>182</sup>

As we have seen, however, it had a good distribution and was considered a financial success by the trade press. It also attracted good viewing figures on television, coming 10th in the top ten when broadcast in 1988.<sup>183</sup>

Perhaps the crucial factor, given its production costs of approximately Lire 13 miliardi<sup>184</sup>, were its mixed reviews and the fact that critics outside Italy also found it problematic, disliking it as a García Márquez adaptation, and finding it odd as a Rosi film. Specialized cinema journals, such as Positif (which had always championed Rosi) reviewed it carefully, linking it to aspects of Rosi's earlier work, stressing the complexity and difficulty of the project, and discussing it as an adaptation. By far the most interesting of British reviews is that of Thomas Elsaesser<sup>185</sup>, who comes to the conclusion that, for Rosi's generation, critical realism has become part of their nostalgic myth. Since art cinema is now mainly funded by television, cliché and self-referentiality form part of the communication of Rosi's generation of cinema with its audience. The two names

together, García Márquez and Rosi, imposed consideration and indeed, from interview to interview, Rosi was at pains to mention their friendship, hinting at mutual esteem.<sup>186</sup>

This phase of Rosi's career is one in which several recent trends are consolidated. He is now placed firmly within the 'quality' genre, able to attract well-known producers, distributors and stars. His reputation also draws in international finance and media deals. His relationship with the critical machinery is, however, not so good. It has changed from the often fierce discussion and debate of Rosi's ideas and means of expression, to consideration of the film within the context of Rosi's career as an artist, and its success as an adaptation.

At the same time, the contracting film industry and the increasing interlinking of sectors of the audiovisual industries result in the commodification of the 'author', and a restriction in the range of opportunities open to a filmmaker. In the next section, we will consider the consequences for Rosi's career.

#### PHASE 6: Restricted opportunities

As the 1980s progressed, the trend towards a concentration of genre products was discernible. Although there is still a spread of genres, Italian production increasingly clusters around comedy, drama, pornography. Drama could also now include that increasingly large genre of films to which I earlier gave the label of 'quality', often book or other adaptations. Here the desire on the producers' part to cover their risks with regard to a film's subject matter can be seen to coincide with the commercial imperatives of increasing

vertical integration in the media (rather than cinema) industries. Publishers have increasingly followed the advertising revenue into television, where their interests in private TV channels have enabled them to cover their costs nationally and abroad, whilst exploiting books and magazine serialization in the traditional way. Silvio Berlusconi, for example, uses private television stations in which he has a financial interest (like Spain's Telecinco) to schedule US and UK imports and the products of his three Italian stations. By spreading the costs of purchase and production in this way, he increases his profits. It is even claimed that television film producers do not even need spectators, having made their money by pre-selling the advertising which will surround and interrupt the film when broadcast; all that is needed is that the producer has "une bonne image par rapport aux publicitaires" and popular comic and/or female stars.<sup>187</sup>

Analysis of the top box office results in the last ten years shows the domination of the US film industry. The crash of Gaumont Italia in 1985 additionally created a vacuum in the distribution sector which US companies hastened to fill.<sup>188</sup> Some idea of the profound consequences for European cinema can be gauged from Roddick's analysis of the situation in 1989. In that year, the top 10 films in eleven European countries with a combined population of over 350 million people (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the UK), 74% of spectators (96 million people) saw US films;

"36% ... saw European films. ... Of those European films, a further 9 per cent were entirely American financed. So, four times as many people saw



American films as saw European ones. And, for the films in the sample, (43 in all), the vast majority of the tickets sold - 87.2 %, or nearly 114 million people - were for films which were distributed by American or American-owned companies".<sup>189</sup>

In this situation it becomes very difficult to make films, even as a well-known, quality director. After Cronaca di una morte annunciata (1987), Rosi had worked on an adaptation of Eduardo De Filippo's Sabato, domenica, lunedì with Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni in mind as stars. These plans fell through and the project was taken up by others.

Dimenticare Palermo (1990) was another co-production, by the Cecchi Gori company/Group Leopard, Berlusconi's Reteitalia, and Gaumont. The film is set jointly in New York and Palermo; its cast is multinational (Americans James Belushi, Mimi Rogers; British, Joss Ackland; French, Philippe Noiret; and Italian, Vittorio Gassman, Carolina Rosi). James Belushi had specialized in American popular comedies and suggested himself to Rosi; Joss Ackland, a stage actor of considerable presence, had recently played the mafia boss in Cimino's The Sicilian, a very inferior retelling of the story of Salvatore Giuliano. More importantly, the film came in amongst a large clutch of American mafia/gangster movies, such as Scorsese's Goodfellas, Coppola's Godfather III, Peter Medak's The Krays, the Coen brothers' Miller's Crossing, Abel Ferrara's The King of New York. Perhaps because the Americans were already 'doing' mafia pictures, Rosi's film had difficulty getting foreign distribution. It did not find a distributor in the UK.

Dimenticare Palermo marked a return to discussion of issues - the legalization of drugs - in the press, but it was not a box office success. It was released at the time of parliamentary

debate on drugs and Rosi claims that, for this reason, it had bad distribution.<sup>190</sup> It has only been shown on Berlusconi's pay television channel, Telepiù, going from there to sell-through video. This might seem to bear out our previous assertion that audiences are not necessary to films coproduced with private television interests. This may be so in the case of Dimenticare Palermo where the costs of the film and its publicity can be amortized by screenings on Berlusconi's television and satellite channels, offset by income from the advertisements which interrupt it and which have been sold by the Fininvest publicity company. However, as we have suggested in the early part of this Chapter, the media industry itself recognizes the importance of a good theatrical release in ensuring a film's success in several sectors - foreign sales, television sales, videocassette sales.<sup>191</sup>

Analysis of the distribution patterns of the 80 films released between 1 January and 30 April 1990 allows us to put Dimenticare Palermo into a context. It was amongst those 28 films which were distributed in depth, that is they were immediately released in at least 11 of the 12 città capozona, and then went on release in between 20 to 76 città chiave. Compared to Fellini's La voce della luna (also distributed by Penta), Rosi's film was slower to penetrate the città chiave and only made Lire 1,135,341,000 by the end of its run at the beginning of July. Fellini's film made over Lire 5 miliardi in the same period and its box office returns are much more similar to the US blockbusters in this category which make several miliardi very rapidly. A contributing factor to Fellini's success must have been the presence of the actors

Roberto Benigni and Paolo Villaggio. Even Woody Allen's Crimes and Misdemeanours and Susan Seidelman's She-Devil have returns of over Lire 2 miliardi. The least successful films with this release pattern are Italian - Amelio's Porte aperte (Lire 361,979,000), Tessari's C'era un castello con quaranta cani (Lire 543,101,000), Pelosso's Non più di uno (Lire 277,490,000).

Interestingly, this category includes, besides US and Italian mainstream genre films, several 'quality', art films - L'avaro, a Molière adaptation, Crimes and Misdemeanours, Almodovar's Atame!, Tornatore's Nuovo Cinema Paradiso, Porte aperte, Soderbergh's Sex, Lies and Videotape, Dimenticare Palermo and La voce della luna. Tornatore's film was released in the 1988-89 season but had to wait until March 1990 for interest abroad to ensure a good distribution in Italy when it very rapidly made Lire 4 miliardi.

Films released in 8-10 città capozona and a limited number of città chiave amounted to 33. They can generally be categorized as European art films, US independent films, and 8 Italian films. Although some of them seem to have spent some time on the exhibition circuit, none of them made over Lire 1 miliardo. The third category, released only in 1-7 città capozona, consists entirely of foreign films.

Dimenticare Palermo is interesting as a case study because it encapsulates the difficulties of the Italian film industry. Not only does it have to fight unequally with US films on home territory dominated by US distribution companies, but on international release it has to repeat the process and compete with other national cinemas which are in the same position as



the Italian in their own home markets. The only Italian films identified as capable of crossing national boundaries are 'quality' films, of which Rosi's film is an example:-

"Anche l'ambizioso e assai costoso Dimenticare Palermo di Rosi è sì fra i film distribuiti in Francia, ma internazionalmente (come nazionalmente del resto) non ha certo avuto successo e la sua uscita nei cinema d'oltr'alpe non è dovuta né al fatto che il film sia girato in inglese, né alla presenza di due fattori come Jim Belushi e Mimi Rogers, quanto piuttosto al fatto che il film è tratto da un romanzo francese di Edmonde Charles-Roux e soprattutto alla firma di Francesco Rosi, autore stimato, amato e apprezzato in Francia."<sup>192</sup>

The necessity of having a 'name', of being recognized as an 'auteur' nationally and internationally, is all the more necessary when one considers the fall in numbers of spectators in Italian cinemas. The most consistent drop in numbers, directly related to cinema closures, occurs in the South<sup>193</sup>, an important consideration for a filmmaker who favours southern themes and settings.

Not being a box office success constitutes somewhat of a pattern currently in the Italian film industry. Analysis of weekly box office returns shows that some films wait a considerable time for release after their 'nulla osta' has been granted, and that their poor distribution makes them very little money. Giacomo Martini calls these the "film fantasma" which prove that "il prodotto nazionale non è assolutamente remunerativo, anzi è un investimento del tutto sbagliato".<sup>194</sup> The assumption must be that most of these are destined for broadcast. Indeed, the producer's role has become much more complex as costs rise and cinema spectator numbers fall:-

"Di qui la necessità di coinvolgere nel minimo garantito una o più reti televisive, di internazionalizzare sempre più il prodotto. Tanto che lo

stesso produttore tradizionale a un certo punto si è dimostrato impari al compito, ciò che ha favorito la nascita di una nuova "rotella" della macchina-cinema, di un nuovo intermediario, che potremmo chiamare l'acquirente, il quale cerca di monopolizzare quanto più gli è possibile gli stock di film in offerta, dei "pachetti", come si usa definire oggi, ... il risultato di certi acquisti all'ingrosso, per dettare lui i prezzi a quelli che sono diventati oggidì i maggiori committenti; i networks televisivi." <sup>195</sup>

Dimenticare Palermo was turned down by RAI, according to Rosi "Per il fastidio di esportare un'immagine dell'Italia che non fosse più che edificante" <sup>196</sup> after negotiating with him and his producers (Cecchi Gori) for more than a year. Rosi attracted some criticism for making the film with Berlusconi's Fininvest organization:-

"E mi stupisce che .... Giorgio Bocca definisca la mia posizione con l'espressione "meglio interrotto che disoccupato". Non ho fatto un film coprodotto dalla Fininvest per evitare la disoccupazione (rifiuto continuamente delle proposte di lavoro), ma per dimostrare anche alla Rai che potevo realizzare proprio quel film che avevo scelto di fare. Bocca ... avrebbe dovuto scrivere: "meglio interrotto che censurato". <sup>197</sup>

There has been some suggestion that some of the distribution difficulties which the film has had reflect the contemporary presence of mafia interests within the media and other 'respectable' industries. A more prosaic reason for the alliance with the Berlusconi organization can be attributed to industry trends. A recent survey to the country of origin of TV movies in 1990, based on a BLM and Partners' survey of programme transmissions in 7 European countries in 1990, shows that whereas c 87% of RAI Uno's tv films originate in the USA, (the remaining 13% has to be shared between UK, French and Italian films) Berlusconi's Italia Uno channel shows around 70% US and 30% Italian films <sup>198</sup>. Ironically, therefore,

Berlusconi, who is usually characterized as the destroyer of the Italian film industry, has in fact enabled different types of film production to take place. His advertising and broadcasting interests allow him greater opportunity to hedge the financial risks involved.

Legislation has so far not been successful in forcing Berlusconi to divest himself of some of his media interests, although he has had to transfer ownership of the newspaper, Il Giorno to his brother Paolo.

Perhaps the presence of so many cans of pepsicola in the electoral sequences of Dimenticare Palermo bears out Marcotulli's prediction that the 1990s will see the integration of sponsor, promotion, direct response, public relations, directly linked to private television production.<sup>199</sup> He points out that at the beginning of the 1980s there were only 110,000 cinemas in the entire world, but that, by the end of 1990, the number had fallen to 77,000. Less and less income is therefore available for films which only have a cinematic distribution and they are doomed to "un mercato sempre più circoscritto che, oltretutto mortifica in maniera particolare i film italiani". Marcotulli, however, identifies huge increases in family spending on audiovisual products, the legal market in videocassettes in 1990 alone accounting for lire 845 miliardi.

However, Lino Micciché made the point that Dimenticare Palermo was released in the same season as films by Damiano Damiani and Gianni Amelio which also attempted to engage with contemporary Italian reality, after years when very few Italian films indeed tried to do so.<sup>200</sup> If then very few



people see them, it is difficult to foresee the experiment being repeated.

Where spectators can of course see films exploring the context of "fatti di cronaca" is on television. Between 1984 and 1990 episodes of La Piovra regularly attracted audiences averaging 12,000,000 to RAI 1. Starring first Michele Placido and then Vittorio Mezzogiorno, it was likened in many respects to the "cinema democratico" of Rosi, Petri, Loy, Maselli, Ferrara and others, in its use of dialogue, story construction (the investigation), indignation, desire to denounce the rot in society, "una buona capacità di dare corpo ai fantasmi della dietrologia, la provata certezza che a pensare il peggio in Italia non si sbaglia mai."<sup>201</sup>

A tendency to draw on the subjects of journalistic enquiries has also been observed and recorded over several years now by the researchers of the Osservatorio Permanente sulla Fiction TV Italiana of the "Il Campo" Centre, directed by Milly Buonanno. From the 1990-91 television season onwards the researchers detect a neo-neorealist tendency, a return to "impegno" in television fiction, drawing on journalistic investigations familiar to spectators, those of RAI being oriented towards the social and political context, and those of the Fininvest channels tending to explore the emotional world. From 1988-89 onwards a progressive move from fiction centring on the upper classes to depictions of the world of the middle classes was observed, together with an overwhelming emphasis on contemporary stories and urban settings.<sup>202</sup> Given that the production capacity for new fiction by RAI or Fininvest is identified as around 100 hours per year,

television series appear to be where the social reality of contemporary Italy is examined or worked through.

The same researchers identify the development of this trend towards the depiction of social problems and contemporary reality in the 1991-2 season, and a corresponding revitalization of the Italian tradition of cinematic realism of which Rosi is a part.<sup>203</sup> Revitalization here implies the adoption of the fast pacing and narrative modes of the television detective genre, not the prestige production with which Rosi is now associated.

This section on Rosi's career closes on a symbolic note. Less than a month after Giovanni Falcone was assassinated on the road to Palermo, four film directors raced to film his story. Giuseppe Ferrara, at the head of the pack with \$5.5 million budget, had known the Judge since Falcone acted as his technical adviser for the filming of the ambush of the carabinieri General Dalla Chiesa in his 1982 film, Cento giorni di Palermo.<sup>204</sup> Francesco Rosi declined to take on the project, saying that "the events were too recent"<sup>205</sup>.

In 1992 the new Italian government authorized the release of blocked funds of \$32 million through the Comitato di Credito Cinematografico and available via the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro to allow the completion of six films in production or pre-production. Five of the films are described as by "veteran directors" - Olmi, Ferreri, Scola and Archibugi, and included funds for Rosi's Diario Napoletano, which was shown on RAI 3 in December 1992. Rosi's film is personal and self-reflexive, a chronicle of his journey back to Naples, his past and present. It is the ultimate accolade and recognition of

his position as cultural icon, as 'auteur'.

### Conclusion

Reports of increased US production<sup>206</sup> do not augur well for the Italian film industry. American distributors already control the Italian market and their aggressive marketing will force Italian films into marginal positions in their own market. The development of Italian cinema in the 1990s will depend increasingly on televisual destinations and the exploitation of standard products across a range of media forms.

The statistical material consulted is revealing and interesting in itself, allowing as it does assessment of attempts to theorize the workings of a notoriously byzantine industry. As important, however, is the evidence from the trade sources of the way in which the film industry perceives its own operation. The reasons for the financial success of films are exhaustively analysed. Trade journals write about certain types of cinema in terms of the director's (and other key creative people's) involvement but, attempts to correlate box office receipts and personal involvements have revealed the importance of the producer in Italian cinema. It is the producer who mediates the project to the industry, thus acting as a nodal point for the interaction of audience interests, societal tastes and changes, the effects of State legislation, the availability of finance and technological possibilities. An astute director who wishes to keep making films can gravitate towards sympathetic producers and, if established, can influence the amount of finance that is likely to be available. The industrial constraints and the financial



stakes in film production are, however, now so high that mainstream film directors are unlikely to exert total creative control over their films. Directors such as Rosi seem to be unable to return to modestly-financed production. They become trapped by the structures of the industry in which they have had some success, with the result that they are offered big budget, international, complex projects where polemical debate and incisive critiques of society are inappropriate. These projects, characterized by technical expertise, set pieces of showy mise en scène, complex narratives, serious ideas, and the personal signature and commitment of one person, the director/author, provide definitions of the 'quality' genre. Our study of how Rosi's career moves progressively into the mainstream, 'quality' sector contributes to an understanding of the nature of the genre and how it has evolved.

In the following sections of this work I shall examine Rosi's films and the results of the tensions produced between his creative aims and the industrial process.

1. PERRELLA, GIUSEPPE: L'Economico e il semiotico del cinema italiano (Theorema Edizioni, Rome, 1981).
2. These sources provide indications of popularity upon which to estimate the financial success of a production package. Films are assigned a genre category; their main creative personnel (producer, director, director of photography, screenwriter(s), editor, composer, stars) and production company are listed. Detailed box office returns for the period of release onto the prima visione circuit are given, week by week and broken down by name of cinema in which exhibited and the name of the città capozona - the main town in each of the twelve zones of distribution.
3. MARCOTULLI, ANDREA: "Identikit dello spettatore cinematografico italiano", Cinema d'Oggi, 11, 11.6.1992, page 37.
4. Perrella, page 14.

5. In 1984, the Rome Tribunal found that "... la direzione artistica, il montaggio, il doppiaggio ecc, dovevano essere curati e diretti dal regista; gli interpreti erano scelti dal regista; eventuali modifiche dovevano essere prese solo e esclusivamente d'accordo col regista;" FRAGOLA, AUGUSTO: "Il rapporto tra regista e produttore" in Cinema d'oggi, 13, 11.7.84, page 3.
6. Perrella, page 21.
7. FISKE, JOHN: Television Culture (Methuen, London, 1987) pages 108-127.
8. Pio Angeletti, producer, describes the process. Distributors present bills within 30-40 days. Exhibitors take their percentage immediately and have 40 days to present the quota to the distributor. The producer gets 20% of the takings, "... e se un film non va subito bene lo "smontano" e allora dovresti fare cause, avere uno studio legale sempre attivo." FASOLI, MASSIMILIANO ET AL (Eds): La città del cinema (Casa Editrice Roberto Napoleone, Rome, 1979) page 81.
9. Both the director Giuseppe Tornatore, and the market analyst Alessandro Ferraù testify to Cristaldi's "mania dei numeri", which led him to press for the publication of the first statistical survey of Italian cinema, with box office returns, published by AGIS in 1974 (Catalogo generale dei film italiani dal 1956 al 1973). He astutely backed first features by directors, notably Rosi but more recently Tornatore and Carlei, but interspersed these with less problematic films. The same year that he produced Rosi's Salvatore Giuliano, for example, he also produced Duccio Tessari's Arrivano i titani, Giannelli's Giorno per giorno disperatamente, Germi's huge success, Divorzio all'italiana, and Petri's L'assassino. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Il successo dei film di Franco Cristaldi", Cinema d'Oggi, 14, 23.7.1992, pp 8-9.
10. J P: "New TV laws spark battle on the air", The Times, 31.10.1986.
11. ROSSI, UMBERTO: "Cinema: da fenomeno di massa a fattore d'élite", Cinemasessanta, 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 4.
12. PICARD, ROBERT G: Media Economics: Concepts and Issues (Sage Commtext Series, v.22, London & New York, 1989) page 40.
13. "... ci si rese anche conto che la sala cinematografica rappresentava pur sempre una vetrina per la successiva utilizzazione televisiva. L'indice di gradimento che il film registra nella sala determina così indirettamente anche una scala di valori per il collocamento degli spot pubblicitari televisivi. La corsa all'approvvigionamento rialza sensibilmente i prezzi di acquisto dei diritti di sfruttamento." DELLA SALA, ENZO: "La trasformazione del



mercato: produzione, distribuzione ed esercizio dopo i network televisivi", Cinemasessanta, 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 19.

14. MODOLO, GIANFRANCO: "Fininvest in grigio, calano i profitti, crescono i debiti", La Repubblica, 30.7.1993.
15. CAULI, FRANCO: "400 miliardi nel 1992, il fatturato del cinema in cassetta", Cinema d'Oggi, 3, 11.2.1993, page 3.
16. BROSIO, GIORGIO & SANTAGATA, WALTER: "Il film" in Rapporto sull'economia delle arti e dello spettacolo in Italia, (Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, Turin, 1992) pp 335-6.
17. It has been claimed by several directors to be rife with "clientelismo", financing films by well-known 'auteurs', with the addition of two or three first films by young directors each year, ignoring anyone in between. SABOURAUD, FRÉDÉRIC: "La génération perdue", Cahiers du Cinéma, 395-6, May 1987, pp 46-47.
18. SILVESTRETTI, ELIO: "L'anomalia necessaria e imperfetta dell'articolo 28", interview with Ansano Giannarelli, Cinemasessanta 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 21.
19. "Law No. 1213, 1965, stipulates that state subsidies can be awarded to independent producers who produce 'quality' films: Article 28 of the law guarantees that after a discretionary judgement by a governmental commission, the state will supply 30 percent of the cost. Thanks to this law about forty-five films are financed annually, most of them original works which receive an average of 220 million lire (in some cases up to 500 million lire). This provision has served the purpose of helping quality directors, but at the same time it has been abused to subsidize mediocre productions." BARILE, PAOLO & RAO, GIUSEPPE: "Trends in the Italian Mass Media and Media Law", European Journal of Communication v. 7 (1992), page 279.
20. BAFILE, PAOLO: "Alle categorie economiche sta bene così", Cinemasessanta, 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 10.
21. HILL, JOHN: Sex, Class and Realism (BFI, London, 1986) page 54.
22. Silvio Berlusconi's Canale 5 and Italia 1 chains, for example, are involved in the production of films which will be shown on his private TV channels. A few years ago Berlusconi announced the award of an annual "Superstar Prize" to be given each season to the distributors of the three best films and the films with the best critical response. The prizes consist of airtime on the two channels. It may also be surmised that the products advertised in the frequent 'spots' or commercial breaks in his feature films are also on sale



in Berlusconi's Standa supermarkets. Product placement on celluloid may be the next step.

23. LANE, JOHN FRANCIS: "Independent Title Seekers", Screen International, 4.9.92, pp 13-14, 18.
24. These cinemas were what was left of the State Eci circuits, whose private sale in the early 1960s provoked a huge scandal. ROSSI, UMBERTO: "Arrivano i nostri: Cannon compra Gaumont Italia", Cinemasessanta, 1/161, Jan/Feb 1985, pp 23-24.
25. In 1980, Italians spent a total of Lire 800 miliardi on audiovisual products (of which 44% went on cinema, 55% on television, and 1.1% on video); in 1990 the total amount spent had increased to Lire 3,000 miliardi (of which 20% on cinema, 54% on television, and 26% on video). MARCOTULLI, ANDREA: "Il mercato audiovisivo in Italia e all'estero, dieci anni di cambiamento", Cinema d'Oggi, 14, 3.9.91, page 31.
26. European Television and Video, Datamonitor, London, 1992.
27. MARCOTULLI, ANDREA: "Un anno di cinema nelle TV italiane" Cinema d'oggi, 4, 27.2.1992, page 9.
28. ANON: "Statistiche dell'industria cinematografica 1990", Cinema d'oggi, 1. 17.1.1990, page 6.
29. "Borsa Film", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 21, 4.6.93, p 5.
30. GARNHAM, NICHOLAS: Capitalism and Communication (Sage, London, 1990) page 203.
31. SCHWARTZ, JOHN et al: "Japan Goes Hollywood", Newsweek, 9.10.1989, pp 16-21.
32. Perrella, pp 19-20.
33. It could be argued that the formation of these clusters of regular collaborators could be attributed to 'common sense' notions of friendship and acquaintance, and, as in all spheres of human activity, personal preferences undoubtedly play their part. Yet even personal preferences can be structured as an affinity towards certain types of narrative forms, or the possession of relatives operating in particular sectors of the industry may predispose people towards definable areas of activity.
34. Ladri di biciclette was not a cheap production by Italian standards. It cost about Lire 90,000,000 to make (B: "Lire, dollari e morale", Cinema, no 32, 15.2.1950, page 69). Film financing in the 1940s was quite haphazard and De Sica had got backing from a couple of private industrial sources, but was relying on the state body, ENIC, for distribution - distribution being then as now

a crucial equation in a film's success. Guarini described at the 1952 Parma Conference on neorealism how, during his stint on the board of ENIC, he was deputed to supervise the production and distribution of the film. Once the film was finished, Guarini promoted private showings aimed at stimulating interest in critics and providing the basis of a new kind of film launch. Suddenly ENIC decided to present it in a few Italian cities. It was very unsuccessful because Guarini claimed that the public did not know from the posters how good the film was. Guarini agreed with De Sica on a new system of launch. Starting in Milan, De Sica personally presented the film and explained it in all the main cities in Italy. This provoked huge interest and a considerable increase in takings. GUARINI, ALFREDO: "Il neorealismo e l'industria", Cinema, 123, 15.12.1953, pp 320-323.

35. ANON: "Un referendum su la "Terra trema", Cinema, 32, 15.2.1950, page 64.
36. QUAGLIETTI, LORENZO: Storia economica-politica del cinema italiano 1945-1980 (Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1980) Chapter II.
37. Quaglietti maintains that the exhibition sector comprised 6,551 cinemas in 1948 and that this sector therefore needed US products to keep cinemas functioning, besides public desire for US films. Quaglietti, page 47. Guback claimed, in 1969, the "The reliance on foreign markets has reached the point where now the industry receives slightly more than half of its theatrical revenue from foreign exhibition. While the American film has been present in Europe for half a century, only within the last two decades has this monetary dependence prevailed", leading to productions with foreign markets in mind. GUBACK, THOMAS H: The International Film Industry: Western Europe and America since 1945 (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1969) page 10. This is a more mutually dependent situation than is usually acknowledged.
38. CAMPASSI, OSVALDO: "Gli altri", Sequenze 4, December 1949, page 35.
39. Also sounding the knell for neorealism at this time was Dino De Laurentiis who, when asked his opinion about the state of Italian film production, said, "Je crois que la plus grave défaut du cinéma italien est le manque d'acteurs, c'est à dire de noms chers au public et connus des distributeurs italiens et des acheteurs étrangers, en un mot de "vedettes". Il est temps d'en finir avec les acteurs pris dans la rue, ... qui sont souvent la cause de la froideur avec laquelle notre public accueille nos films. Il faut créer des vedettes italiennes. ... Je ne crois ni à l'esthétisme ni à l'intellectualisme; je crois simplement aux films qui plaisent au public et je



regrette de devoir constater que bien souvent, de jeunes metteurs en scène, pleins de talent et de sensibilité et en outre dotés d'une excellente préparation technique, sont fourvoyés par des préjugés esthétiques ou intellectuels et ne font rien pour ramener le film italien au public italien." FERRAU, A: "Interview du producteur Dino De Laurentiis", Il Giornale dello Spettacolo, Feb 1949, no 2, anno 2, page 7.

40. "Je ne me sentais pas mûr, je voulais acquérir une plus grande expérience des choses. Cela se justifiait au début des années 50 où l'industrie était très structurée et où l'on ne faisait pas confiance aux jeunes. Le métier était très hiérarchisé, très traditionnel. ... Je faisais des choses qui trompaient mon désir de travailler tout en m'enrichissant pour ce que je réaliserais ensuite au cinéma. Comme assistant, je voulais participer aux films depuis le moment où le projet prenait forme jusqu'au stade final de la fabrication. ... J'ai donc ensuite toujours choisi le metteur en scène avec lequel je voulais travailler, mais, parallèlement, je faisais du théâtre..." CIMENT, MICHEL: Le dossier Rosi (Editions Dire/Stock, Paris, 1976) pp 80-81.
41. "Colloquio con l'autore" in COSULICH, CALLISTO (Ed): Uomini contro di Francesco Rosi (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1970) pp 53-60) and "La ricerca multipla del regista" in ROSI, FRANCESCO & SCALFARI, EUGENIO: Il caso Mattei: Un 'corsaro' al servizio della repubblica (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1972, pp 73-91).
42. "Les années de formation", interview with Rosi in Ciment, Le dossier Rosi, pp 75-77.
43. Cosulich, "Colloquio con l'autore" in his edition of the screenplay of Uomini contro, page 57. Rosi has testified to the influence of Visconti on several occasions, primarily on the level of methodology, a "... besoin d'approfondir et de rechercher, une soif de connaissance et une somme d'interrogations et de doutes que je souhaite vraiment ne jamais perdre" (TASSONE, ALDO: "Le cinéma de Francesco Rosi. Un certain témoignage sur l'histoire italienne, de 1947 à nos jours..." Image et Son, 307, June 1976, page 77. See also FERRARA, GIUSEPPE: Francesco Rosi (Canesi, Rome, 1965) pp 157-9, and Ciment, op.cit. pp 79-80.
44. Ciment, page 77.
45. Rosi & Scalfari, page 80.
46. Ciment, op.cit. page 79.
47. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Introduzione" in VISCONTI, LUCHINO: La terra trema (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1977) pp 11-17.



48. MARADEI, MANLIO: "Luchino Visconti e l'elemento umano", L'Eco del cinema e dello spettacolo, 26, 15.6.1952, page 13.
49. OJETTI, PASQUALE: "I film italiani", Eco del cinema e dello spettacolo, anno II, no 9, Sept 1951, page 16.
50. Rosi in FALDINI, FRANCA & FOFI, GOFFREDO (Eds): L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano raccontata dai suoi protagonisti 1935-1959 (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979) page 161. Elsewhere in the same book Rosi calls this his apprenticeship, "Io ero ai primi anni, stavo lí ad ascoltarli, mi lasciavano parlare e dicevo le mie posizioni, assolvevo ai compiti che mi assegnavano, ma naturalmente erano le prime sceneggiature (with Ennio Flaiano on Parigi è sempre Parigi) a cui partecipavo, e stavo imparando, facevo il mio apprendistato." Op.cit. page 346.
51. "Brutti e cattivi" in APRA', ADRIANO & CARABBA, CLAUDIO: Neorealismo d'appendice (Guaraldi Editore, Rimini-Firenze, 1976) page 55. Aprà also suggests that the well-known, realist, directors regularly made use of the stereotypes and characteristics of the so-called 'industrial' genres.
52. SPINAZZOLA, VITTORIO: Cinema e pubblico: lo spettacolo filmico in Italia 1945-1965 (Bompiani, Milan, 1974) pp 79-81.
53. Quoted in Faldini & Fofi: L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano raccontata dai suoi protagonisti 1935-1959, page 168.
54. SIBILLA, GIUSEPPE: "Bellissima, o dell'ottimismo", L'Eco del cinema e dello spettacolo, 58, 15.10.1953, page 5.
55. Ciment: Le dossier Rosi, op.cit. page 77.
56. OJETTI, PASQUALE: "I film italiani", Eco del film e dello spettacolo, n 9 Sept 1951, pp 16-17.
57. COSULICH, CALLISTO: "Il film e il critico", Eco del film e dello spettacolo, no 16, 15.1.1952, pp 15-16.
58. Spinazzola suggests that anyone wishing to find the surviving traces of neorealism after 1951-52 need only look at the tail end of the box office statistics each season. Spinazzola, page 20.
59. Ciment: Le dossier Rosi, op.cit. pp 80-83.
60. CASIRAGHI, UGO: "Il festival di Cannes", L'Eco del cinema e dello spettacolo 71, 30.4.1954, page 13.

61. ZAGARRIO, VITO: "La generazione del neorealismo di fronte agli anni cinquanta" in TINAZZI, GIORGIO (Ed): Il cinema italiano degli anni '50 (Marsilio Editori, Venice, 1979) page 112.
62. NOWELL-SMITH, GEOFFREY: Visconti (Secker and Warburg, London, 1967) pp 89-91.
63. Processo alla città won a 1952-53 nastro d'argento for "il complesso degli elementi che hanno contribuito alla attendibile evocazione di una epoca e di una società." The film is interesting in that its subject is a famous 1911 trial against the Neapolitan camorra, which rigorously used the facts and results of the court enquiry. The plot hinges on a double murder and the form is that of the criminal investigation, which reveals links between high political and social society and the criminal world of the camorra. Zampa's film uses the conventions of mainstream narrative - psychologically rounded characters, stereotypes from the Neapolitan theatrical tradition, linear treatment of events, studio-based interiors, strong emotions. There are a couple of interesting uses of the long take, but Rosi's use of mise en scène is very different. Rosi designs spatial representations to be very communicative of social realities. Zampa's film does, however, contain interesting illustrations of corruption in the upper middle classes, the manipulation of the democratic process and a strong final denunciation. When Rosi came to make his own films, these elements were given a firm ideological grounding.
64. MONACO, EITEL: Annual Report in L'Industria cinematografica negli anni 1968-69 (ANICA, Rome, 1970) pp 32-3.
65. Quaglietti, page 223.
66. The presence of Cinecittà is significant because the State-run studio facilities provided another level of subsidy to the industry. In the '60s Cinecittà offered delayed payment facilities, which made it a bank to its own clients. CHAMPENIER, SERGE: "Quo vadis Cinecittà" La Revue du Cinéma, 451, Jul/Aug 1989, page 67.
67. Catholics criticized it for lack of emotional involvement and positive views of society and communists for its failure to show the necessity of peasant rebellion. Ferrero identified it as one of two promising new works, praising its dryness, absence of folklore and the picturesque, that is to say, its distinction from neorealismo rosa, FERRERO, ADELIO: "Velleità e risultati dei giovani registi italiani" Cinema Nuovo, 137, Jan/Feb 1959, page 43. Tino Ranieri found Rosi skilled but "... ha nella sua stessa completezza di fattura un freddo limite. La cura lo raggela, lo studio di celebri modelli lo tende fino all'eccesso." RANIERI, TINO: "Il Leone sentimentale" Sipario, 150, Oct 1958, page 21. Nino



Ghelli of the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico disliked it (and I magliari) for its lack of a moral position, "... un film tutto gratuito e retorico in cui le reminiscenze stilistiche erano talmente evidenti da puntualizzare in modo significativo l'insufficienza espressiva del suo autore ancora legato ai risibili miti del realismo a oltranza." GHELLI, NINO: "I magliari" Rivista del Cinematografo, 11-12, Nov/Dec 1959, page 372. Guido Aristarco had the same criticism, from an opposing ideological position, "Pur partendo dalla cronaca, e da una cronaca italiana ... il giovane regista arriva a essa, e ai fenomeni che l'hanno determinata, attraverso il cinema americano, o meglio alcuni dei suoi generi: quello gangster da una parte; e quello dell'estetica della crudeltà e della violenza." Rosi fails to show the necessity of peasant rebellion, "... ha scelto insomma la via del naturalismo arido, e pur dichiarando di credere nel neorealismo e di voler in esso operare, di questa corrente ha abbandonato uno degli attributi fondamentali. un chiaro giudizio morale". ARISTARCO, GUIDO: "Cronaca e storia" Cinema Nuovo, 135, Sept/Oct 1958, page 151.

68. BOLZONI, FRANCESCO: I film di Francesco Rosi (Gremese Editore, Rome, 1986) page 25. Critics have expressed some fascination with Sordi's appeal, from his early '50s roles of "... eroi per forza e vigliacchi per vocazione, arrivisti senza scrupoli, bulletti da vicolo e vittime predestinate; sordidi e melensi ometti inebriati di ossequio e piaggeria per un potere corrotto e volgare ..." (MARINO, RUGGERO: "Sordidi italiani" Il Tempo, 4.11.79) to his creation of a repertoire of stereotypical, lower middle class "abitudini, tic, viltà", constructing "... una maschera con i toni medi, col quotidiano, l'impiegatizio, ha stravolto in grottesco l'inquilino della porta accanto, ha fatto satira con piccoli detriti di vita, ha caricato di un enorme potenziale parodistico il luogo comune di ogni giorno" (LEONARDI, ANNA: "Il mascherone originale del luogo comune" Paese Sera, 7.9.1980).
69. Sordi films were seen to be the exception to the rule that one fifth of box office receipts were obtained during the prima visione release. The response to comedies in this area of exhibition was generally weak but Sordi's films achieved 32-37% of their takings in their first year. ANON: "Un quinto degli incassi totali si realizza nelle "1<sup>a</sup> visione", Giornale dello spettacolo 22, 16.6.1962, page 4.
70. Ghelli again criticizes Rosi for not taking a moral position in respect of his characters and for the "... gratuità delle soluzioni narrative e la falsità e la banalità delle azioni e delle parole dei personaggi, la frammentarietà di racconto, il gusto per i facili effetti spettacolari..." - all of which contribute to the film's charm and visual pleasure!



71. CODELLI, FRANCO & NIOGRET, HUBERT: "Entretien avec Franco Cristaldi" Positif, 316, June 1987, page 27. The idea of putting the film in the form of an enquiry came from Rosi, Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Franco Solinas.
72. It has been said that one of the reasons why so many stars and famous people visited the set of Salvatore Giuliano, inviting constant press attention, was to combat the threats to disrupt or cancel the production. Financial support from the distributors was withdrawn shortly before shooting was to start and Cristaldi had to find alternatives, going to Lux with a package of three, controversial films. Shooting was undertaken under constant surveillance by the carabinieri, ostensibly to make sure that no-one made off with the automatic weapons; they also viewed the daily rushes. KEZICH, TULLIO: Salvatore Giuliano (Edizioni FM, Rome, 1961) pages 170, 182.
73. This took place in the open, the film projected against a sheet in front of those who had been involved in the actual events. DE MASI, DOMENICO: "Nel mio film non c'è la parole FINE: è una storia di mandanti e sicari che dura ancora", interview with Rosi, Paese Sera, 5.7.1980.
74. Innovative style and serious content were seen as an unusual combination in a mainstream film. Guglielmo Biraghi found it "... un film di grande classe: così per bellezza d'immagini e bravura tecnica come per il coraggio implicato nella scelta e nello svolgimento del tema". BIR: "Salvatore Giuliano", Il Messaggero, 2.3.1962. The fact that the film was re-reading fairly recent events and making political connections was also mentioned.
75. MANGANO, ATTILIO: "Il cinema si attinge sempre più alla realtà storica del Mezzogiorno", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 19, 26.5.1962. Even though Mangano considers La sfida "essenzialmente lirico e popolare", it is interesting to see at this stage that Rosi's work is being identified as having common themes, and serious themes at that.
76. L'Industria cinematografica negli anni 1960 e 1961, (ANICA, Rome, 1962).
77. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "La velocità di assorbimento secondo il genere dei film" Giornale dello spettacolo, 15, 16.4.1965, page 7.
78. The readers of Cinema Nuovo voted it amongst their top 5 films, after Viridiana, Luci d'inverno, 81/2 and before Il Gattopardo. PATRONI-GRIFFI, GIUSEPPE: "Le mani sulla città di Rosi", Cinema Nuovo, 168, Mar/Apr 1964, page 98.
79. Patroni Griffi, Cinema Nuovo 168, March/April 1964, pp 88-99.

80. Guback, page 181.
81. Bolzoni, page 31.
82. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "La parte e il tutto", Giornale dello spettacolo, 6, 19.2.1966, page 7.
83. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "La corsa all'oro", Giornale dello spettacolo, 15, 23.4.1965, page 9. It was also one of the best earners for its distributor in the 1964/5 season.
84. HALDNER, BRUNO: "Henker und Opfer, ein Kreis: "Il momento della verità", Cinema (Switzerland), no 2, July 1982, page 55.
85. Goffredo Fofi, for example, in an article which originally appeared in Image et Son, wrote, "Produttore per la metà, l'altra metà essendo spagnola, non ci pare che Rosi abbia detto nel suo film tutto quello che avrebbe potuto e forse inizialmente voluto dire. Un'operazione di autocensura riduce in partenza di molto la forza del film, che non è così organizzata come nelle Mani sulla città. L'ambizione era quella di presentare, attraverso una "carriera" di toréro, da contadino del Sud, a sottoproletario immigrato negli slums di Barcellona, a idolo dell'arena destinato a una morte precoce, anche e soprattutto la Spagna, la sua situazione disperante e complessa, le sue varie forme di oppressione e innanzitutto la chiusura, il freno ferreo all'evoluzione di una società nuova. ... Su un piano di letteratura popolaresca e di cinematografia alla Hollywood, Sangue e arena non diceva, in fin dei conti, molto di meno." FOFI, GOFFREDO: Capire con il cinema (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1977) page 67.
86. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Lenta ma progressiva l'evoluzione dei gusti", Giornale dello spettacolo, 7, 26.2.1966, page 4.
87. Bolzoni, page 32.
88. TASSONE, ALDO: Parla il cinema italiano, Vol I (Edizioni Il Formichiere, Milan, 1979) pp 286-7.
89. The lengthiest review commented on this "absurdly improbable assignment for Rosi", attributing it to a gap in production after his Che Guevara project was abandoned, and giving it the merit of "integrity to its own commitment. ... the story is followed through with the conscious seriousness of Rosi's most weighty films; and seriousness is, of course the prerequisite of successful comedy." (ROBINSON, DAVID: untitled, The Financial Times, 25.7.69). Others credited Rosi with "an agreeable send-up of the fairy tale" (ROUD, RICHARD: "Rosi's magic wand", The Guardian, 25.7.69) or called it "lovely" (DOUGLAS, STUART: untitled, Morning Star,



26.7.69). Generally the reaction was unfavourable - "excruciatingly trite" (PROUSE, DEREK: "Cinderella Italian-Style", Sunday Times, 27.7.69); "fairy tale of quite numbing naivety" (WILSON, CECIL: "It's bewitched and bewildering", Daily Mail, 22.7.69).

German critics questioned the state of the Italian film industry - "Italiens Filmindustrie soll in besonderem Maß von amerikanischen Produzenten ennektiert sein. ... Die Produktionsbedingungen, die ihm amerikanisches Kapital (Carlo Ponti) ermöglichten, haben seinen Stil verändert... ist das ein Beleg dafür, daß Werke wie Salvatore Giuliano, Die Hände über der Stadt oder Augenblick der Wahrheit als kommerzielle Produktionen heute kaum mehr möglich sind?" EDER, KLAUS: "Schöne Isabella", Film, no 6, June 1968, page 38) and "...Schwer zu sagen, was den Regiseur Francesco Rosi... zu diesem Film veranlasst haben mag..." (HERZBERG, GEORG: "Die schöne Isabella", Filmwoche, 31/32, 19.4.68).

90. In terms of box office receipts C'era una volta made over twice as much as Petri's A ciascuno il suo (L 497 million, starring Volonté), Bellocchio's La cina è vicina (L 566 million), Antonioni's Blow Up (L 599 million), Pasolini's Edipo Re (L 548 million), Visconti's Lo straniero (L 420 million) and the Taviani brothers' Sovversivi (L 41 million). Rosi's project has to be seen as a deliberate choice.
91. UNGARI, ENZO with RANVAUD, DON: Bertolucci by Bertolucci (Plexus, London, 1987) page 52.
92. Ferrau, for example, whilst trumpeting his usual line that "... la verità ... è che molto spesso i film cosiddetti impegnati socialmente, culturalmente, risultano infarciti di un velleitarismo intellettualoide, si dimostrano ampollosi od oscuri, quasi sempre immaturi come tecnica, come linguaggio, come pensiero", did acknowledge that the situation was a complex one. I sovversivi, for instance, had a disastrous 1<sup>a</sup> visione run but made 54% of its returns later; Pasolini's Edipo Re however was successful, making more than Lire 200 million in 1<sup>a</sup> visione, 37.3% of its takings. FERRAU: "Il pubblico è sovrano", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 7, 20.2.1971. The overall impression gained from these regular articles is of surprise (that the public appeared to like serious cinema) and perplexity (as to how to treat it). In a speech while President of the ANICA Unione Nazionale Produttori Film, Franco Cristaldi alludes to the mutual hostility and rigidity of industrialists, advocating instead a real cultural politics for the film industry - "Molte sono le diffidenze da superare, e non solo nei confronti degli operatori culturali del cinema, ma anche negli stessi ranghi dell'industria, ove spesso il cinema è considerato con il sospetto che gli deriva dalla sua atipicità e dalle sue contraddizioni. Ma è anche certo che questo è l'unico modo per cui in



avvenire, accanto alla ristretta espressione "film industriale", se ne possano rintracciare altre ben più vaste, quali cinema industriale, o cinema dell'industria, o cinema "con" l'industria. Dietro le quali si cela una sostanza di autentico e qualificante spessore politico e culturale." CRISTALDI, FRANCO: "Sullo Schermo", Cinema d'Oggi, 23, 14.6.71, page 1.

93. MICCICHÉ, LINO: Cinema italiano degli anni '70 (Marsilio, Venice, 1980), pp 8-18.
94. BRAUCOURT, GUY: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Cinéma 71, 158, July/August 1971, page 133.
95. BACHMAN, GIDEON: "Francesco Rosi: an interview", Film Quarterly, vol 18, no 3, Spring 1965, page 55.
96. At the time of Uomini contro's release, Callisto Cosulich examined the statistics of World War I casualties, mutinies and desertions, and diaries and testimonies of the time, which agreed with Rosi's refutation of this conclusion. COSULICH, CALLISTO: "Dietro Uomini contro", in his edition of the screenplay, Uomini contro (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1970).
97. Lussu had always refused to allow his book to be filmed, until Rosi approached him in the winter of 1968 with a draft screenplay and a few months' work on locations, story and character. Lussu was disposed to agree because he'd been one of a group of politicians invited to a private screening of Salvatore Giuliano years before and "... mi fece l'impressione di una persona coraggiosa e coerente. ... Perché di coraggio e di coerenza per girarlo Rosi ne avrà bisogno". CATALANO, GIUSEPPE: "Mezzo secolo in trincea", L'Espresso, 14.12.69.
98. He initially found two or three enthusiastic producers, who obviously thought it was going to be a film about heroics, "... poi leggevano il copione e l'entusiasmo si raffreddava." Rosi in COSTANTINI, LUIGI: "Nella grande guerra di Rosi fantaccini contro generali", Panorama, 30.4.70. "Mi dicevano: è un pugno nello stomaco. Mi obiettavano: non si può condannare l'unica guerra che l'Italia abbia vinto, la sola che sia ancora viva e cara nel ricordo della gente. Mi mettevano in guardia: avrai grane, ti si scaglieranno tutti addosso, nascerà uno scandalo", Rosi interviewed in TORNABUONI, LIETTA: "Contrastata conferenza stampa di Francesco Rosi", La Stampa, 1.9.70.
99. ACCONCIAMESSA, MIRELLA: "Un duro viaggio nel ventre della guerra", L'Unità, 2.1.70.
100. Luciano Perugia formed a new production company, Prima Cinematografica, to make the film. FERRERO, NINO: "Con Rosi sull'Altipiano", L'Unità, 22.10.70.

101. See Cinema d'oggi 46, 7.12.70 and 47, 14.12.70 for statistics of its second programming, in only two cinemas (Golden and Ritz) in Rome. The period before Christmas is not traditionally favourable for political or serious films. Released in September 1970, the film's subject was heavily debated, which helped its returns on the 1<sup>a</sup> visione circuit, MARINUCCI, VINICIO: "Un anno bifronte", Giornale dello spettacolo, 48, 31.12.70.
  
102. "Pensi che io non ho preso una lira di Uomini contro perché l'ho coprodotta. C'ho messo tutta la mia paga dentro al film. Non ho preso un soldo, per poter fare il film come l'ho voluto fare io. E non ho avuto una difesa." See my interview in Appendix Three.
  
103. Volonté trained in the 1950s in the Piccolo Teatro di Milano and Brechtian theatre. His first film roles were in peplum epics and spaghetti westerns but, since the early '60s have been predominantly in film drama and art cinema of a political nature - "Je ne choisis pas vraiment mes rôles: j'accepte ou non un film en fonction de la conception que je me fais du cinéma. Et il ne s'agit pas ici de donner une définition du cinéma politique à laquelle je ne crois pas car tout film, tout spectacle d'une manière générale est politique: le cinéma apolitique est une invention du mauvais journalisme. Ce que j'essaie, c'est que les films dans lesquels je joue disent quelque chose par rapport au mécanisme de la société qui est la nôtre, que ces films répondent à une certaine recherche d'un morceau de vérité. Il y a, pour moi, nécessité d'entendre le cinéma comme un moyen de communication de masse...". BRAUCOURT, GUY: "Guy Braucourt a rencontré Gian Maria Volonté", Écran, 6, June 1972, page 20, and he calls his work the expression of political attitudes and class positions - WIKTOROWA, JELISAWETA: "Das Phänomen Volonté", Film und Fernsehen, no 2, 1980, page 48.
  
104. ARGENTIERI, MINO: "Gli italiani a Venezia", Rinascita, 4.9.70. This article was listed under the rubric "Problemi della cultura", indicating the importance accorded to the film as well as the book.
  
105. CATALANO, GIUSEPPE: "Mezzo secolo in trincea", L'Espresso, 14.12.69. Lussu did not collaborate in the writing of the screenplay, declaring that he had so much faith in Rosi that he did not even read it. MICCICHE, LINO: "Dichiarazione del Sen. Lussu sul film di Francesco Rosi", L'Unità, 16.10.70.
  
106. TORNABUONI, LIETTA: "Perché un soldato deve combattere?", La Stampa, 1.9.70. This statement provoked the critic of La Stampa to draw her readers' attention to the cost of Rosi's coat, French watch, elegant English shoes, elegant daughter and wife!



107. When Guy Braucourt suggested that the beauty of Rosi's colour images of war was somewhat dangerous, Rosi maintained that "Cette beauté ne m'a pas gêné, car elle n'est pas formelle. A partir du moment où, pour des raisons commerciales, on ne fait plus que des films en couleurs, il faut accepter ce que cette forme de technique apporte de contraintes esthétiques. Il y a quelques années, Orson Welles me disait qu'il n'avait jamais vu un grand film en couleurs, que pour lui le grand cinéma s'arrêtait au noir et blanc..." Later on, at the suggestion that his cinematic language was more original in Salvatore Giuliano, Rosi uses the example of Rossellini to justify his changes in style. Braucourt, pp 134 & 136.
108. Tom Milne is fairly typical in preferring Kubrick's Paths of Glory as a more complex dissection of the mechanics of power, hinged around more rounded characterizations. MILNE, TOM: "Venice", Sight and Sound, v 39, no 4, Autumn 1970, page 226.
109. Il caso Mattei came 19th in the national listings, making L 1,257,026,000. Lucky Luciano, which was made relatively cheaply, made a similar return (L 1.125,849,000) but came 32nd in the national chart. It had a longer run than the previous film, perhaps because the American, The Godfather was doing so well.
110. Ferrau identified the success of political films as part of a change in public taste towards more dramatic films ("La "dozzina d'oro" del 1° trimestre 1970", Giornale dello spettacolo, 40, 31.10.70, page 9), but that such films usually did best in large cities ("Le scelte per il film medio", Giornale dello spettacolo, 2, 17.1.70, page 7). In an interview, Fulvio Frizzi, Director General of Euro, claimed that "per realizzare il successo con film d'impegno, è necessario incentrarli su una problematica viva, vera, toccante. ... Il cinema italiano è l'industria nella quale le formule - le etichette, le ricette hanno vita molto breve. L'importante è seguire con la massima "concentrazione", come dicono gli sportivi, i gusti e gli orientamenti del pubblico" (F S: "Il successo al film di idea", Giornale dello spettacolo, 9, 7.3.1970, page 12). Vinicio Marinucci investigated in Cinema d'oggi the persistence of serious themes in Italian cinema, "Politica e religione" (25. 22.6.70 page 3), "I problemi del lavoro" (26, 30.6.70, page 3), "Gli squilibri sociali" (27, 6.7.70, page 5), "Guerra e resistenza" (29, 20.7.70, page 3), coming to the conclusion that audiences had always been interested in reflecting on their own times. L'analista, for example, gave a long list of producers, and box office returns of films on social issues, concluding that producers had always been willing to invest in 'difficult' but commercial films! (Cinema d'oggi, 41, 12.11.73, page 5).



111. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Dal libro allo schermo", Giornale dello spettacolo, 7, 17.2.73, page 6.
112. "Infine, gl'incassi dicono anche che i film intelligenti vanno commercialmente bene quando rispettano le buone regole dello spettatore", L'ANALISTA: "I test delle 1<sup>e</sup> visioni", Cinema d'oggi, 20, 15.5.72, page 5. Volonté's presence was noted as a factor in the success of the two films, L'ANALISTA: Cinema d'Oggi, 13, 27.3.72, page 5; and the same writer conducted a detailed analysis of how each film did in the different geographical zones of Italy. Predictably, given its subject matter, Petri's film did better in the north than Rosi's. L'ANALISTA: "Il pubblico dei film d'impegno sociale", Cinema d'Oggi, 29, 17.7.72, page 10.
113. L'ANALISTA: "Situazione anomale del nostro mercato", Cinema d'Oggi, 43, 13.11.72, page 5.
114. Micciché saw it as a more complex film than Salvatore Giuliano because involving harder creative choices. MICCICHE, LINO: "L'Ambiguità e gli enigmi del potere nel film di Francesco Rosi su Mattei", Avanti, 27.1.72. Ciccirelli discussed continuities in Rosi's themes. CICCIRELLI, TULLIO: "Il caso Mattei", Il lavoro, 10.2.72.
115. The first took the form of a debate between Rosi and Eugenio Scalfari on the political importance of Mattei and Rosi's choice of historico-political events to highlight or suppress. SCALFARI, EUGENIO & ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Il vero e il falso Mattei", L'Espresso, 6.2.72. The second gathered together politicians representing a range of positions (Gian Aldo Arnaud, DC; Adolfo Battaglia, PRI; Aldo Bozzi, PLI; Silvano Labriola, PSI; Eugenio Peggio, PCI) with Umberto Eco, Rosi and Tempo's film critic. The debate has more than a little interest in the context of the early 1990s. Peggio, for example, makes the point that, Mattei used to ring ministers and tell them what to do but today the call is more likely to come "del ministro che impone ai dirigenti degli enti di gestione qualcosa che fa comodo alla DC, alla corrente della DC cui appartiene il ministro." MORANDINI, MORANDO (Ed): "Le verità nascoste del caso Mattei", Tempo, 13.2.72.
116. Rosi interviewed in COSTANTINI, COSTANZO: "Rosi: il mio metodo e le fonti", Il Messaggero, 27.1.72.
117. SARRIS, ANDREW: untitled review, Village Voice, 4.10.73.
118. ROSI, FRANCESCO & SCALFARI, EUGENIO: Il caso Mattei: Un 'corsaro' al servizio della repubblica (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1972).
119. L'ANALISTA: "Chi è sceso al compromesso?", Cinema d'Oggi, 38, 22.10.73, page 5.

120. L'ANALISTA: "Produttori reazionari", Cinema d'Oggi, 41, 12.11.73.
121. Interview with Rosi in SCIANNA, FERDINANDO: "Lucky Luciano una storia che si ripete", L'Europeo, XXIV, no 45, 8.11.73.
122. JANNUZZI, LINO & ROSI, FRANCESCO: Lucky Luciano (Bompiani, Milan, 1973).
123. MORRIONE, ROBERTO: La RAI nel paese delle antenne (Casa Editrice Roberto Napoleone, Rome, 1978) Part 1.
124. GRASSO, ALDO: Storia della televisione italiana (Garzanti, Milan, 1992) pp 234-240.
125. Gallo felt that RAI had a duty to give public space to Italian film production, given that foreign competition and rigidity in the distribution sector marginalized Italian cinema, and that State investment appeared to be made on the same criteria as private investment i.e., on the basis of commercial return. GALLO, MARIO: "Il modello produttivo europeo: il caso italiano" in MAGRELLI, ENRICO (Ed): Sull'industria cinematografica italiana (Marsilio Editori, Venice, 1986) pp 95-96.
126. Lo spettacolo in Italia 1976, (SIAE, Rome, 1977) page xii.
127. Lo Spettacolo in Italia 1976, pp 197-200.
128. ANGELI, OTELLO: "Anatomia della crisi", Cinema 60, 125, Jan/Feb 1979, pp 7-8.
129. ANON: "Costi di produzione 1974 e 1975", Cinema d'oggi, 16, 20.4.76, page 4, and "Costi di produzione 1975 e 1976", Cinema d'oggi, 13, 5.4.77, page 4.
130. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "La malattia del ricambio", Giornale dello spettacolo, 25, 26.6.76, page 8.
131. L'ANALISTA: "Analisi dei generi dei film "mezzo miliardo", Cinema d'oggi, 24, 14.6.76.
132. As Mattei and Lucky Luciano (and others) had shown, there was room in the market for more thought-provoking genre films, although "... in genere il pubblico dal neorealismo in poi, ha preferito resistere ai fatti della realtà quotidiana, sia pure deformati" (FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Il crimine rende", Giornale dello spettacolo, 12, 27.3.76, page 10.
133. It opened in three cinemas in Rome in mid-February 1976 and ran for a month, bringing in a total of Lire 107,277.000. At the beginning of March it also opened in Milan, Turin and Genoa and later for two months in Milan, but around 18 days elsewhere. The film aroused enormous



critical interest, not least because of the final assertion by the official of the Revolutionary Party that "La verità non è sempre rivoluzionaria". Whether criticism centred on differences between Rosi's film and Sciascia's book, or on philosophical problems of the left, the scores of newspaper articles alone reveal that Cadaveri eccellenti touched a very raw nerve.

134. Aggeo Savioli (L'Unità, 14.2.76) saw it as a lack of confidence in the PCI and its policies because it was based on "una fondamentale omogeneità tra potere e forze d'opposizione, anche se a queste ultime si attribuiscono poi determinanti qualità morali come la probità e il disinteresse personale." The PCI Senator, Antonello Trombadori, however, defended the film for setting out clearly and simply the nature of the problem of how a revolutionary party should act and for its "... costante, responsabile riconferma della scelta che disinnesci ogni tentazione di golpe reazionario e, lungi dal rimandare la partita, continua a giocarla spostando i reali rapporti di forza nel paese sul terreno della vigilanza democratica di massa e della difesa del quadro costituzionale." Quoted in ZAMBETTI, SANDRO: "Francesco Rosi, Cadaveri Eccellenti" in Cineforum, 152, March 1976. L'Europeo, for example, devoted the "Le Idee" section of two separate issues to interviews with Rosi and Guttuso exploring the political ideas underpinning the film. FINI, MASSIMO: "I comunisti e il film di Rosi", in L'Europeo, 5.3.76 pp 12-14, and "Guttuso parla del film di Rosi", in L'Europeo, 12.3.76, pp 12-14.
135. Film adaptations of Sciascia's work were the subject of the 1992 "Efebo d'Oro" Festival in Sicily in 1992. The University of Zürich conference on "Sciascia, scrittore europeo" in 1993 included my paper entitled "Storie semplici: Sciascia e il cinema".
136. Leone claims to have advised Alberto Grimaldi to work with quality directors when the spaghetti western genre was played out. Grimaldi went on to work with Fellini, Rosi, Petri and Pontecorvo. His experience with co-production deals would have allowed him to spread the risk which art cinema would normally have entailed. "Sergio Leone" in FASOLI, MASSIMILIANO et al (Eds): La città del cinema (Roberto Napoleone, Rome, 1979) page 187. See also Appendix Four.
137. RONDOLINO, GIANNI: "Un'annata contraddittoria" in his Catalogo Bolaffi del cinema italiano 1975/1976 (1st edition, 1st reprinting, Giulio Bolaffi Editore, Turin, 1978) pp 6-7.
138. The situation led to the occasional nice irony, as when Gaumont proposed in the early 70s to close its cinemas on Sunday evenings because the 8.30 pm film emptied cinemas, although it was aware that the film programmed in that slot was, more often than not, a Gaumont product. TOSCAN



- DU PLANTIER, DANIEL: "La politique des producteurs", Cahiers du cinéma, 395-6, May 1987, page 14.
139. CIANFARANI, CARMINE: "Society, market & industry", Italian Cinema of the 80s (EAGC, Rome, 1984) page 13.
140. "Praticare, vampirizzare il prodotto cinematografico italiano garantiva una audience costante e sicura. La valorizzazione di un cinema di produzione nazionale portava con sé l'esigenza di disporre di prodotti tipicamente italiani da inserire nel palinsesto", FRECCERO, CARLO: "Il palinsesto della televisione commerciale" in BARLOZZETTI: Il Palinsesto. Testo, apparati e generi della televisione (Franco Angeli, Milan, 1986) pp 83-94.
141. Rosi started on the project in 1977, writing it then with Guerra and La Capria, and then beginning the battle for production funds. The total cost of production was Lire 1.5 miliardo, of which RAI contributed 600 milioni. CATAACCHIO, ANTONELLO: "Intervista: Cos'è il sud? Perché ho fatto un film sul "mistero" meridionale?", Il Manifesto, 24.2.79. See my interview in Appendix Three for Rosi's reservations about working with RAI, claiming that the advantages lay with television rather than film. Eboli may have been one of RAI's prestige productions, but Rosi typifies company attitude as "fiscale". Although he was making a 4-hour television film for RAI, he was only allocated as much film stock as for a normal 2-hour film. MATELLI, DANTE: "Nel Sud, un pianeta che non cambia mai." La Repubblica, 25.5.78.
142. Kezich, page 197. Carlo Levi also visited the set of the film. Rosi nurtures his projects sometimes for many years before they are able to come to fruition.
143. "Quindici anni fa, mentre giravo *Salvatore Giuliano*, Levi venne a Montelepre e voleva affidarmi il *Cristo*. Non feci il film perché, a parte le difficoltà pratiche, sentivo che non era il momento. Sono contento invece di farlo adesso perché sono convinto, come lo sono stato per altri miei film, che dobbiamo avere il coraggio di riprendere certi argomenti e ridiscuterli." RUSSO, GIOVANNI: "Francesco Rosi: "Nel film Carlo Levi sono io", Corriere della Sera, 17.5.79.
144. BALDINI, JOLENA: "Un regista si è fermato a Eboli", Paese Sera, 12.8.78.
145. ARGENTIERI, MINO: "Ritorno a Eboli con occhio nuovo", Rinascita, 9, 2.3.79.
146. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Senza precedenti", Giornale dello spettacolo, 47, 19.12.1980, page 26, listed it fifth in the national charts, after Comencini's L'Ingorgo, Laurenti's L'Infermiera di notte, Poeti's Ciao and Montaldo's Il giocattolo. See also FERRAU, "La bimestre

in cui qualcosa si è mosso", Giornale dello spettacolo, 24, 13.6.1980, page 12, in which he identified increased returns due mainly to increased ticket prices.

147. FERRAU: "La parte ed il tutto", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 21, 29.5.80, page 6. Ferrau makes a comparison between earnings in 1<sup>a</sup> visione in 1970 and 1980, concluding that slightly fewer films make a substantial amount of their takings at that time.
148. In fact this is borne out by Rosi's violent protest at Eboli's being taken off the Fiamma and Enic-Eci circuits, in spite of its success, in favour of a US film - "Gli autori cinematografici hanno più volte segnalato come una delle cause della crisi del cinema italiano i criteri con cui i proprietari delle sale, dei punti, cioè, di diffusione del prodotto, gestiscono l'iter e la fortuna di un film: criteri arbitrari e non sottoposti a nessun confronto." ANON: "Protesta del regista Rosi per lo "smontaggio" del "Cristo", L'Unità, 2.4.79.
149. ANON: "Cannes, anno trentadue" in Giornale dello Spettacolo, 19, 12.5.79, page 4, and L F: "Americani favoriti (sulla carta)" in Giornale dello Spettacolo, 20, 19.5.79, page 5.
150. Terra mala by Michel Random for French television, containing (amongst others) a long interview with Rosi and a rare film document of Rosi and Carlo Levi talking. Antonio and Aldo Vergine also made a programme with Tullio Kezich for RAI 2 about the shooting of Eboli and Rosi's work, thus marking it as a cultural event at several levels.
151. This was spelled out in the most uncompromising fashion in the US trade press -. "Should be a considerable success in specialized cinemas if only on the strength of Levi's extraordinary book." ARGO: Variety, 21.3.79, page 24.
152. FERRAU: "Il successo dei "sempreverdi" attori italiani", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 8, 25.2.83, page 18.
153. FERRAU, A: "Immersione senza rischio", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 13, 2.4.82, page 6.
154. It was distributed in Italy by Gaumont and abroad by Sacis. Tre fratelli's run was followed with interest by the trade press seeking useful precedents to follow. It had good reviews in the New York press and worldwide "che Gian Paolo Cresci, amministratore delegato della Sacis, considera un elemento importante per lo sfruttamento a livello internazionale del cinema italiano. Poiché, pertanto, solo la qualità permette di superare le frontiere, è da auspicare l'instaurarsi di una nuova politica produttiva che apra ai nostri film lo sbocco sui mercati esteri." ANON: "Candidature al premio Oscar", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 8, 27.2.82, page 6.



155. SALTINI, GIUSEPPE: "Testimonianza, con sentimento", Il Messaggero, 1.5.82.
156. The findings and statistics of the Enquiry were published in issues 37-40 of Giornale dello Spettacolo, 15.10.82 - 5.11.82. Amongst other things they show the loss of audience in the South as the number of cinemas decreases.
157. Until 1984, Gaumont was a considerable force in the industry. In 1982, for instance, it was commended for producing 12 films of cultural significance. It was also said unkindly of it that it was an elephants' graveyard, producing glossy films by quality, but ageing directors! However, as Renzo Rossellini admitted when he was sacked, only one of the 14 Italian films on his 1983 listino (Monicelli's Amici miei) made money. (See Appendix Four for a brief assessment of Gaumont's cultural policy.)
158. TOSCAN DU PLANTIER, DANIEL: "La politique des producteurs", Cahiers du cinéma, 395-6, May 1987, page 14.
159. FERRAU, ALESSANDRO: "Immersione senza rischio", Giornale dello spettacolo, 13, 2.4.82, page 6. Tre fratelli in particular was not generally successful in Italy, making 60.4% of its income in its first run. "Abbiamo portato l'esempio del film di Rosi per mettere in luce la posizione del pubblico delle "1<sup>a</sup> visione" che si è dimostrata in certo modo disponibile al film, mentre nel resto delle visioni si è avuta la chiusura. Tre fratelli infatti nelle "prime" ha incassato 364 milioni, nel resto del territorio cinematografico nazionale circa 238 milioni e mezzo".
160. ALLSOP, DAVID: "The New Culture Club", Options, October 1989, page 22.
161. ANON: "Composizione socio-geografica del pubblico", Giornale dello spettacolo, 40, 5.9.82, page 5.
162. ANON: "Borsa Film" in Giornale dello Spettacolo issues 34-46, 28.9-21.12.84.
163. There were no protests at a ticket price of FF 40 as opposed to the usual 1<sup>a</sup> visione price of FF33. ANON: "Taccuino parigino", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 13, 30.3.84, page 5.
164. The list included Dario Argento, Liliana Cavani, Pasquale Festa Campanile, Carlo Verdone. Apart from Argento, who has a cult following abroad, the other names show the difficulty which typically Italian genre films have of breaking out of their own market. FERRAU: "Sono 24 i registi "d'oro" italiani dell'ultimo triennio", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 46, 21.12.84, page 24.



165. KEZICH, TULLIO: "Sarà libera, come un musical", La Repubblica, 3.2.83.
166. BERTOLOTI, FRANCO: "Rosi: la mia Carmen", Avvenire, 11.5.84; CIMENT, MICHEL: "Rosi in a New Key", American Film, v 9, n 4, Sept 1984 pp 37-42; GOLDBERG, ROBERT: "Bizet Would Recognize This New 'Carmen'", New York Times, 30.9.84, pp 19, 24;
167. Grasso, pp 247-250.
168. L'Altra domenica launched the careers of, amongst others, Roberto Benigni and Maurizio Nichetti. The series were marked by rapid cutting between items, interactivity with the audience, self-referentiality and a sort of knowingness or complicity between presenters and audience. VELTRONI, WALTER: I programmi che hanno cambiato l'Italia (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1992) pp 15-17.
169. Grasso, page 249.
170. CIANFARANI, CARMINE: "Society, market and industry" in Italian Cinema of the 80s op.cit. page 14.
171. SCHLESINGER, PHILIP: "Blow to the Heart: an Interview with Gianni Amelio", Framework, 22/23, page 14. Schlesinger reports a claim of Paolo di Valmarana, Capo Struttura of RAI 1 that the Italian public will not accept the subject of terrorism, unless it is linked to problems of the family. Critics remarked that Rosi's Tre fratelli was one of the very few films in recent years to discuss the phenomenon of terrorism.
172. It was recognized that these genres were a straightjacket for young directors at the start of their careers. "Purtroppo la quasi totalità dei giovani autori-attori-registi italiani che sono posti in luce in questi ultimi anni, anche se hanno incentrato i loro film su fatti e problematiche dei giovani, non sono usciti dai ferrei binari della "commedia" e del "genere brillante". FERRAU: "Inesauribile commedia all'italiana", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 12, 29.3.85, page 4.
173. ZACCONE TEODOSI, ANGELO: "Il marketing del film "d'essai": Identikit dello spettacolo "specializzato" (il nuovo cinefilo)", Cinema d'Oggi, 14, 27.8.87, pp 16-17.
174. FERRAU: "D'arte o d'autore: è il "film di qualità", ma nelle piccole città piace poco", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 29, 4.9.87, page 6.
175. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "L'histoire de la Chronique", Positif, 315, May 1987, page 15. As Rosi says, "Aujourd'hui le prix de l'argent, les garanties sur l'argent, tous les mécanismes financiers sont tels qu'ils pèsent, de façon très élevée, sur le budget d'un film. Très souvent, pratiquement le tiers d'un film passe en frais

financiers, on ne le voit pas sur l'écran." See also my interview of 26 February 1987, "Io credo che questo film costi alla fine, al cambio attuale, otto, nove milioni di dollari. Non è una grande cifra. Sono 13 miliardi di lire. Però, di questi 13 miliardi di lire, bisogna poi calcolare quanti di questi miliardi vanno a coprire gli interessi passivi del danaro delle banche, le garanzie bancarie. Cioè, oggi nei film il danaro che va a coprire le necessità di riprese, cioè il danaro che si vede poi sullo schermo, è una piccola parte di tutto il danaro che è il budget di un film..."

176. Rosi, "L'histoire de la Chronique", page 16.
177. Rosi, "L'histoire de la Chronique", page 16. "Le format particulier en Scope du Supertechniscope m'a été proposé par Pasqualino De Santis. Moi, je pensais à la Panavision, un format très proche du Cinémascope. Aujourd'hui, avec l'exploitation TV, le format Scope pose des problèmes. Pasqualino m'a parlé de ce nouveau système qui donne la possibilité à travers divers caches, d'être ensuite utilisé soit comme Scope soit comme format télé, soit encore autrement. C'est indubitablement un avantage. Ça permet de transférer le film dans d'autres formats sans perdre l'espace en hauteur, ni couper les pieds des personnages. Bien sûr cela implique une énorme attention au tournage, il faut prévoir les mouvements à l'intérieur du cadre tant pour le Cinémascope que pour les autres formats. Et puis le choix de ce format correspond bien à la nature des lieux choisis en Colombie, ce sont tous des paysages horizontaux."
178. L'ANALISTA: "I successi della produzione differenziata", Cinema d'Oggi, 10, 21.5.87, page 13.
179. ANON: "Programmazioni cinematografiche nella stagione 1987-88: spettatori ed incassi al 13 dicembre", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 43, 18.12.87, page 21.
180. In one of the more considered, Mino Argentieri attributed its loss of "secchezza espositiva e della vigorosa incisività che sono stati i tratti stilistici più rilevanti di Rosi" to its being a big budget, international production (ARGENTIERI, MINO: "Le solite melo-storie", Rinascita, 6.6.87). Critics generally found it cold - "senz'anima" (DOLFO, NINO: "Cronaca di una morte annunciata", Brescia Oggi, 12.5.87), "una tensione poco incline a liberarsi in pathos" (CAPRARA, VALERIO: Untitled review, Il Mattino, 13.5.87).
181. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "A maggio si rischia", La Stampa, 26.4.87.
182. My interview with Francesco Rosi, Appendix Three.
183. FIELDS, GEORGE: "International Ratings", based on his own AGB market research, Broadcast, 10.2.89, page 52.



184. See my interview with Francesco Rosi, Appendix Two.
185. ELSAESSER, THOMAS: "Chronicle of a Death Retold", Monthly Film Bulletin, v 54, n 641, June 1987, pp 163-4.
186. Rosi met García Márquez at the time of the publication of One Hundred Years of Solitude, when he wrote to him to express his admiration, "... E siccome anche il García Márquez ammirava i miei film, ci siamo incontrati su un terreno di stima e ammirazione reciproca, e siamo diventati amici. ... Io gli ho fatto leggere la sceneggiatura ma lui ha scritto il libro e come tutti gli scrittori che sanno che un film appartiene di più al regista e il libro appartiene di più allo scrittore... sa benissimo che il film sarà il mio film." See my interview with Francesco Rosi, Appendix One.
187. SABOURAUD, FRÉDÉRIC: "La génération perdue", Cahiers du cinéma, 395-6, May 1987, page 46.
188. The Gaumont exhibition sector consisted of 53 1<sup>a</sup> visione theatres in the main cities, a total of 49,396 seats. The circuit was bought by the Cannon group very swiftly for a rumoured \$15 million. (ROSSI, UMBERTO: "Arrivano i nostri: Cannon compra Gaumont Italia", Cinema 60, 1/161, Jan/Feb 1985, page 23) This represented a noticeable change in the equilibrium of the Italian film industry as Cannon's production profile had generally consisted of low quality genre films. Although Gaumont did not own all the theatres it controlled (it rented some of them), the loss of these prime outlets was a blow to European art cinema. This circuit has subsequently formed the basis of Berlusconi's Fininvest Group's Cinema Cinque chain, enabling their distribution arm, Penta, to compete in 1<sup>a</sup> visione with the big American companies.
189. RODDICK, NICK: "New Worlds for Old", The Listener, 16.8.90, page 38.
190. "... aver espresso il mio punto di vista sulla questione mi ha creato il vuoto intorno." SATTA, GLORIA: "Aiutiamo gli eroi anti-droga", Il Messaggero, 10.12.1990.
191. DELLA SCALA, ENZO: "La trasformazione del mercato", Cinemasessanta, 6/184, Nov/Dec 1988, page 19.
192. MONTINI, FRANCO: "Italiani alla conquista dei territori stranieri", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 22, 22.6.1990, page 14.
193. FERRAU: "Lo spettacolo in Italia nell'88: tante cifre nell'Annuario SIAE", Giornale dello Spettacolo, 16, 27.4.90, page 9.
194. MARTINI, GIACOMO: "Lo stato delle cose in cifre", Cinema Nuovo, Yr 41, no 2 (336), Mar/Apr 1992, page 25.



195. COSULICH, CALLISTO: "Cambia il ruolo del cinema non quello del produttore", Cinema d'Oggi 17, 8.10.87, page 4.
196. SESTI, MARIO: "La droga sulla città: intervista con Francesco Rosi", L'Espresso, no 5-6, 11.2.90, pp 68-71.
197. Sesti, page 70.
198. AKYÜZ, GÜN: "International trends in ratings, prices and broadcasting levels", TV World, November 1991, page 19.
199. MARCOTULLI, ANDREA: "Il mercato audiovisivo in Italia e all'estero: dieci anni di cambiamento", Cinema d'oggi 14, 3.9.91, page 30.
200. MICCICHE, LINO: "Breve storia di un destino", L'Espresso, 11.2.90, pp 70-71.
201. GRASSO, ALDO: Storia della televisione italiana, pp 432-435.
202. BUONANNO, MILLY (Ed): Sceneggiare la cronaca: La fiction italiana/L'Italia nella fiction Anno terzo, RAI VQPT, Turin, 1992.
203. BUONNANO, MILLY (Ed): Non è la stessa cosa: La fiction italiana. L'Italia nella fiction, anno quarto, RAI VQPT, Turin, 1993, pp 12-15.
204. PHILLIPS, JOHN: "Film will honour life and death of anti-Mafia hero", The Times, 17.6.92.
205. ANON: "Current affair", The Times, 29.6.92.
206. LANDRO, LAURA: "Hollywood Plans Splurge of Movies in Crowded Market", Wall Street Journal, 14.5.91.

## CHAPTER 2

THE CINEMA OF FRANCESCO ROSI: 1958-1990

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the structures and political/economic context of the Italian film industry predispose producers and production companies to exploit any success in subject or genre with a series of genres or filoni. Tension therefore exists between the inclination of producers to follow one success with another similar in nature or form, and the impetus from filmmakers, or the paying public, towards new themes and subjects. We have also seen that Francesco Rosi operates within the mainstream of the Italian film industry, but also that his work can be placed initially in art cinema and later in the 'quality' sector of that mainstream, where he is firmly constructed as an 'auteur' - a director worthy of individual consideration. In consequence, critics will examine his work in order to identify consistencies within it which can be shown to constitute a Rosi style.

In the previous chapter we have seen that, although Rosi's apprenticeship was served in a variety of mainstream genres, the secondary text of reviews, articles and interviews constantly stresses his work as rooted in neorealism. On the one hand neorealism was typified by a sympathy with the masses<sup>1</sup>, in contrast to the cinema of the Fascist period where middle class settings and dramas, and the conflicts of great leaders predominated. Neorealist films claimed an engagement with history and with the social world of ordinary people. Their innovation was not so much that the social spaces which they explored were new to the screen, but that they linked

cinematic language and narrative themes in new ways. The worlds of the piccola borghesia, the working class and peasants, allied with an exploration of neglected geographical areas of Italy, were evoked naturalistically through accumulation of surface detail. Farassino has identified one root of this strategy in a reaction against the Romanizing and Italianizing tendencies of fascism;<sup>2</sup> but it also marked a return to a strongly regional strand in Italian culture. This can be considered part of the moral imperative of neorealism, that is that filmmakers aimed to suggest the truth of human existence lying beneath the illusion of reality. In the next chapter we will return to a consideration of the influence of neorealism in Rosi's use of the conventions of realist cinema. We will argue that Rosi goes beyond the strategies of neorealism and seeks to develop a critical realism, that is that the events and institutions of contemporary life are interpretable at a deeper level. They are capable of signifying the presence of power relations which are usually concealed, and it is the task of the filmmaker to direct attention to the real social or political relations to which these events and institutions refer.

In the following sections we will identify some of the narrative modes and rhetorical strategies by which the films are able to deliver a critique or examination of what is implied to be the reality of contemporary Italy, whilst still observing for the most part mainstream cinematic conventions. In this Chapter we will also examine some characteristics of Rosi's films which enable critics to identify Rosi's work as a coherent whole, yet one with themes and preoccupations which



show development over time.

Brief synopses of the films will be amplified by consideration of the narrative structures and dominant themes of Rosi's work. We will consider the codes, repetitions, correlations and oppositions which structure the narratives, and how these function to produce the dominant themes. How these are interpreted in cinematic terms through his *mise en scène* will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

1. The investigative format and the use of narrative disruption

The investigative format is that most characteristic of Rosi's work and a consistent feature over his entire career. The format is used to explore reasons behind events and situations. Investigations assume that there is something hidden to uncover. With the exception of C'era una volta and Carmen, all of Rosi's films are to some extent investigations, even when they ostensibly fall into genre categories such as the war film (Uomini contro), the gangster film (Lucky Luciano), or the literary adaptation (Cronaca di una morte annunciata).

Bordwell has suggested that the typical investigation consists of a series of events, the *fabula*. The plot events generally start with the discovery of a crime/a murder, working systematically to uncover *fabula* events, and ending with the resolution of the crime.<sup>3</sup> The work of reconstruction of the *fabula* also requires the spectator to make sense of the story of the enquiry. The principles of narrative retardation and redundancy operate to delay resolution and to give multiple cues to preferred meanings. In Proppian terms, the crime

which motivates the investigation is the disruption which destroys the initial equilibrium; the investigation works to explain the disruption and restore order in the creation of a new equilibrium. We will examine the objects of Rosi's investigations and how his films conform to these canonic norms of cinematic narrative.

Formalist film theorists have spent much time identifying the historical cultural forms which have contributed to the narrative norms of mainstream, Hollywood cinema. David Bordwell, for example, defines the canonic narration as:-

"The classical Hollywood film presents psychologically defined individuals who struggle to solve a clear-cut problem or to attain specific goals.

... In fabula terms, the reliance upon character-centred causality and the definition of the action as the attempt to achieve a goal are both salient features of the canonic format. At the level of the syuzhet, the classical film respects the canonic pattern of establishing an initial state of affairs which gets violated and which must then be set right."

Thus, typically, plot moves from an initial state of equilibrium, which is ruptured by an event or enigma which then sets the narrative going towards a new equilibrium. At the final stage the paradigmatic range of possible meanings and conclusions will have been systematically reduced. Resolution of the enigma, and narrative closure depend on the plot's limitation of preferred meanings.

In mainstream cinema, senses connoting individual character traits are developed to the level of generic, or narrative, appropriateness so that a plausible story world is created, which will in turn provide degrees of motivation for story events. The plausibility of the reality, events and



characters depicted is generally considered to work to conceal the value systems or ideology of the society which produced them. It is possible to generate subversive readings within mainstream cinema - the melodramas of Douglas Sirk, where attention is drawn to the gender and class power relationships of middle class, middle America, are an often-quoted example. So too is Rossellini's Viaggio in Italia (1954), where mise en scène and editing draw attention to the banality of the couple's existence. Our synopses will consider the nature of the disruptions which set the investigation in motion.

The subject of Rosi's investigations is often the 'fait divers' of short newspaper reports, a crime, or a death. These are the classic disturbances of dominant cinematic narrative. The 'fait divers' however functions to destroy or rupture the illusion of harmonious order projected by the ideology of the dominant social class(es). The investigator examines the events, checks their logic and details. The disturbance has allowed an imperfection or chink to appear in a seamless, ahistorical narrative. Stuart Hall has suggested that:-

"There are significantly different ways in which events - especially problematic or troubling events, which breach our normal, common-sense expectations, or run counter to the given tendency of things or threaten the status quo in some way, can be encoded. The selection of codes, those which are the preferred codes in the different domains, and which appear to embody the 'natural' explanations which most members of the society would accept..., casts these problematic events, consensually, somewhere within the repertoire of the dominant ideologies..."<sup>5</sup>

We will examine the ways in which the disruptive narrative events are cued to signal a 'decoding' against the 'natural'



explanations of dominant ideology.

La sfida (1958)

Vito Polara leads a comfortable life in a poor quarter of Naples, surrounded by his admiring family, and living off the black market in American cigarettes. One day when cigarettes are not to be had, he and his main associate, Gennaro, discover the possibilities of profit from agricultural produce, bought cheap in the countryside and sold dear in Naples. His plans for systematic exploitation of the situation through recruitment of willing farmers are thwarted. He realizes that the agricultural produce sector is organized and controlled by the camorra boss, Don Salvatore Aiello. Vito is accepted into Aiello's organization. Simultaneously he courts Assunta, the daughter of a neighbour, sets a wedding day and purchases a luxury apartment overlooking the bay. When Don Salvatore seeks to delay the arrival of tomatoes in the markets in order to enhance the price, the financial consequences are unacceptable for Vito. Vito goes against the camorra and arranges his own deal, and is shot in the market place on his wedding day.

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La Sfida was based on a real incident, given scant space in the press, in which a woman shot the camorra leader responsible for the death of her husband, murdered for disobedience similar to that of Vito Polara. The emphasis on a female character who acts autonomously and breaks the omertà of the camorra would have motivated quite a different story with quite different political conclusions. Instead Rosi suggested a story with a more familiar pattern which was

eventually set in Naples. An unproblematic encoding would stress the human conflict, the story of individuals involved in a revenge killing, with the attribution of blame restoring order.

The subject matter of La sfida has to do with the politics of everyday life - how a man from a certain socio-economic background turns to crime in order to make more than a subsistence living and how he is unable to abide by the rules of the illegal organization which he joins. This kind of narrative paradox has been identified by Nichols as one of the fundamental structures of classical narratives<sup>6</sup>. The initial disruption is Vito's discovery of the manipulation of the price of fruit. Unfolding Vito's story allows the construction of another story reality - that of contemporary history. This (hi)story states that there exist certain economic realities which favour the establishment of illegal, criminal organizations which deform the market structures of the capitalist system by inserting themselves, in a parasitic fashion, between the producer and the market. The nature of these organizations is such that transgression against their 'rules' is punished severely, often by death.

The spectator is primarily cued to construct the story (in formalist terms the fabula) by making inferences as to the probable outcome based on the story fit to canonic norms of classical Hollywood adventure or gangster film narration. Here the spectator would be presented with the settings and the characters (from which to deduce the context and parameters of the drama); the goal of the protagonist(s); the attempts of the protagonists to attain the goal; the outcome

of these attempts; the resolution of the story. La sfida follows this model. The first five sequences introduce us to Vito's lifestyle and companions, his milieu and his future wife, Assunta, and to enough of his character traits as will be relevant to the unfolding narrative. The next two sequences introduce his goal - wealth - and the following six a possible way of achieving it - joining the camorra. The central four sequences reiterate Vito's goal and delineate the obstacles to its achievement. Seven of the last ten sequences concern Vito's achievement of his goal, overcoming the difficulties of having to undergo a wedding ceremony and to forcibly wrest his merchandise from the camorra men on the farm; the remaining three show the outcome of his attempts and conclude with his death.

The goals of the story are all functions of the protagonist, Vito. That is to say that the combination of character traits and background details presented to us provide sufficient motivation for the events around achievement of the goals and, as I have said before, we are given enough references to his character to give coherence and relevance to the story ie., his forcefulness, his ambition/greed, his intelligence. These traits are multiply cued throughout the film by the gestural range of José Suarez' acting. His status is indicated in the first sequence in which he appears by the fact that he is still in bed amidst the bustle of late morning in the tenement. His subsequent actions in relation to Gennaro, his mother, zia Rosa and the tenseness of his movements confirm his aggression and dynamism. His resulting challenges to Don Salvatore Aiello thus become plausible psychologically.



Exploration of the causal logic of Vito's character and surroundings not only motivates the story events but encourages reflection on the reality of his circumstances. One method of doing this is to show the protagonist acquiring and assimilating information. We see Vito doing this twice before his meeting with Aiello - once from the newspaper he reads whilst having his shoes shined; the other, which delays the meeting, when he makes connections between what he has learnt in the city about corruption in the Naples market, and what he has learnt in the countryside. These transformations, showing a character coming to conclusions, forming hypotheses, have the function of moving the narrative forward and guiding our own making sense of the story.

In common with most examples of the gangster genre, the love story is not the main focus of the narrative. Assunta functions primarily to determine the logical development of the story. Vito represents a new generation which disturbs the old order. The erotically-charged interlude in which Vito pursues her up to the roof amidst the flapping sheets is signalled by the narration as "Fine primo tempo". With Vito's conquest of Assunta and decision to work within the camorra, the relative freedom of small-time criminal deals in a limited environment is at an end. The following sequence shows Vito and Assunta viewing a luxury apartment overlooking the Bay of Naples. Within the diegesis, marriage with Assunta and the taking on of heavy financial responsibilities motivate Vito's second challenge of Aiello's authority and his subsequent disobeying of the order to hold the tomato crop for one week. The text is marked by a high level of redundancy, several

sequences communicating this information both visually and through the dialogue.

Thus the initial disruption provokes investigation of the mechanics of the exercise of illegal power, how the camorra exploits the Naples fruit and vegetable market and the peasants in the countryside. The death of Vito, the 'hero', in the last sequence is another major disruption. Films of the gangster genre often end with a death, where a transgressor receives punishment for a crime. The irony of the final murder of La sfida is that Vito has transgressed the laws of an illegal organization. Right has not been re-established. We return to the initial equilibrium with the camorra unpunished. The poor have been reduced to exploiting the poor in order to make a living, and have failed. The effect is to generate a re-reading of the causes of the death. Whilst the plot and, in some instances mise en scène (the lighting and camera angles in the billiard hall early in the film, and in the pelota hall where Vito and Don Salvatore confront each other), reveal the influence of the American gangster film and film noir, La sfida does not escape stereotypical representations of the South. Crowded streets, the impression of vivid light and heat, a picturesque tenement peopled with stock characters from the Neapolitan dialect theatre, monumental but primitive farmhouses and sunbaked fields, trilling, arab-influenced music and songs, are all elements contributing to images of the South as Other. The figure of Vito himself is large, energetic, handsome, emotional; he expresses himself through violent speech and gestures. His opponent whose every move is calculated on the

basis of its effect on his honour and control of his gang shows equally stereotypical characteristics. La sfida does, however, offer a range of southern characters, showing for example how ill at ease the urban Vito, Gennaro and Antonio are in a rural setting. Where the film differs from the canonic gangster film is that Vito's motivation is clearly shown to have an economic basis, and that even Don Salvatore Aiello reacts on the basis of precise calculations of profit and loss (either in terms of money or personal prestige), rather than glorifying individual effort. In this respect it shows the influence of neorealism, being firmly grounded in a particular social reality, whilst going further in its pointing to political 'preferred readings'. We will return to these questions in the next chapter.

#### 1.4 I magliari (1959)

Mario, the protagonist of I magliari, is, like Vito Polara, an outsider trying to integrate himself within an organization for economic reasons. He is an outsider by virtue of being an Italian in Germany (with all the loneliness and alienation which that implies), and a Tuscan amongst a group of predominantly Neapolitans, led by the Roman, Totonno. Ferdinando Magliulo, nicknamed Totonno, inducts Mario into the art of selling shoddy cloth as luxury ware but the deeper economic structures ruling the enterprise of the magliari are revealed when Totonno moves his band from Hanover to Hamburg to escape paying dues to Don Raffaele, the local 'boss' who supplies them with goods.

In Hamburg, however, they are harassed by attacks from a group of Polish gypsies. These threaten to draw attention to the



semi-legal activities of the magliari with the result that their supplier, Herr Mayer, calls in Don Raffaele to sort the situation, and Totonno, out. Mario, who has meanwhile become the lover of Mayer's wife, Paula, is unable to persuade her to accompany him and decides to return to Italy, and honest work, alone.

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The initial disruption of I magliari is the arrival in Germany of the Tuscan, Mario. His attempts to find work lead him into contact with the Roman, Totonno, and the band of Neapolitan magliari. Mario is therefore the classic outsider of quest-narrative, whose search for knowledge allows not only a certain distanciation from the plot events, but also the possibility of narrative closure with attainment of the goal. The paradox structure of classical narrative is also present, and is doubled. The paradox of Mario's story could be described as, 'If I am to make a living I must lie and cheat, but if I lie and cheat it will not be living', and Paula Mayer's as, 'If as a woman I am to better myself, I must earn money; and if I earn money, I am not a better woman', with the added irony that, in acting out the first part of the proposition, he goes from Italy to Germany, and she from Germany to Italy. Nichols suggests that the experience of paradox is so unsettling that it produces a strong desire for resolution and narrative closure<sup>7</sup>. This idea would go some way to explaining the tensions in I magliari. On the one hand the love story dominates the film, to the detriment of the investigation of the social reality of southern workers in northern Europe. On the other hand, since the love affair

starts when both characters are acting out the second part of the paradoxical proposition, successful resolution in the formation of a happy couple is not possible. What the presence of the love affair does allow is the delineation at a further, symbolic, level of oppositions which organize the narrative ie., power/powerlessness, exploited/ exploiter. This is not to assert, however, that the Mario character grows in consciousness of class isolation and exploitation. He is portrayed from beginning to end as an individual searching for his own security and comfort. He gains in knowledge, but is not shown reflecting on the world which he discovers although his emotional reactions, as when Totonno selects a victim in the cemetery, do cue how we are to regard events.

Another focus of tension is the Totonno figure, played by Alberto Sordi. As we have seen in Chapter One, Sordi's persona embodying a range of national vices was already well established and his presence an undoubted draw to attract audience to an otherwise less than standard entertainment film. As Zambetti points out,<sup>8</sup> Sordi's character assumes an importance beyond its function of introducing the milieu and plot elements. Totonno's tricks (stealing Mario's passport, persuading a grieving widow that her husband had ordered suit lengths, pretending a back injury to get the sympathy sale to the woman in the Bierkeller), his constant patter to persuade Mario to join him and the magliari to follow, even his occasional address to camera, provide constant entertainment and divert attention from the drama. Moreover, by foregrounding the defects of Totonno's character, his dishonesty and cowardice, Don Raffaele does not appear a totally

unsympathetic alternative, even if his performance is coded generically as slightly excessive, pathological. In the final confrontation the legitimate businessman, Herr Mayer, allies himself with the parasitic mafioso, Don Raffaele, and the magliari shift their allegiance to the promise of "piena tranquillità". Herr Mayer's assistant, Martinez, translates his master like a business letter, "Il Signor Mayer è lieto di comunicarvi che si è associato con il Signor Tramontana...", thus stressing the resemblance between legal and illegal economic power relations.

As in La sfida, disruption in I magliari takes the form of violence, the attacks by the Polish gypsies and the Italian counter-attack, the threats of Don Raffaele. This is the unacceptable face of business. Order, or equilibrium is only restored by the expulsion of Totonno but the narrative does not conclude there. The penultimate sequence has Totonno giving his version of events, addressing the camera whilst driving his car and ends with his joyfully spotting another funeral party. Moreover the final sequence involves the break up, rather than consolidation, of the couple Mario/Paula's relationship and the economic reasons for this resonate back into the text.

### Salvatore Giuliano (1961)

Moving from the discovery of the body of Salvatore Giuliano on 5 July 1950 in the courtyard of the lawyer, De Maria's house in Castelvetro, the film reconstructs the main stages of the rise and fall of the bandit and his close links with powerful groups in Sicilian life. Used first by the Sicilian Separatist movement and then protected by the mafia whose



interests he serves in return, the figure of Giuliano is never presented as a character whose individual personality traits motivate the events shown. Rather the massacre of communist marchers at Portella della Ginestra and the ensuing trial in Viterbo are used to tease out causes of the Giuliano-phenomenon. The film ends with the murder of Giuliano's second in command, Gaspare Pisciotta, in prison and then, in 1960, with the murder to the mafioso who persuaded Pisciotta to betray Giuliano and who delivered another two important members of the band to the police. The mafioso lies in the same position as the corpse of Giuliano at the beginning, thus suggesting that the story has no neat closure.

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Salvatore Giuliano marks a departure from the norms of linear narrative. A film about a contemporary folk hero would have been an appealing subject and the Robin Hood myth is a good example of a story where the ideological conflict between Saxon and Norman has generally been suppressed. However, the initial disruption, the death of Giuliano, provokes an examination of his historical function in postwar Sicilian history, firstly as a tool of the Separatist movement, then the mafia, and institutions of the State. Identification with the central character is thwarted by showing Giuliano either in long shot, or dead. As I shall show later, subjective camerawork identifying with Giuliano's point of view does occur, but is used to illustrate a dominating voice-over narration.

Lacking character psychology to provide cause and effect motivation, the investigation proceeds by the juxtaposition of

sequences which function almost as tableaux in a Brechtian sense. Linear time development is not consistently observed. Sequences function to comment on previous ones, or to generate fresh enigmas, or to reiterate the thematics of oppression. The following sequences provide an example of this:-

- five sequences showing Giuliano's activities in the service of EVIS and MIS
- sequence announcing in voice-over the granting of Sicilian autonomy in 1946 over visuals of bandits hiding guns in the mountains.
- Lawyer's office, the bandits seek to take advantage of the amnesty. Here the dialogue reiterates the idea of Giuliano as the tool of larger forces. The lawyer functions to introduce the element of class into the equation of oppression and to provide dialogue hooks referring to the mafia.
- The latter are developed next, illustrating a kidnap described in the voice-over.
- One effect of Giuliano's activities: carabinieri search a peasant, the voice-over stating that "Il muro di silenzio è l'arma più forte di Giuliano".
- Short sequences showing how Giuliano and Pisciotta are able to escape thanks to the peasants' early warning system.
- A beautifully composed plan séquence introducing the roundup of the inhabitants of Montelepre and the revolt of the women.

Cumulatively, therefore, these sequences operate repetitively to cue the perception of Giuliano as the opposite of a Robin Hood figure. The effect of his presence and activities is oppression by his band, by the military. Because there is no focalisation on the bandit figure, narrative progression is signalled through the voice-over and dialogues. Journalists function as occasional 'helper' figures to generate fresh enigmas and lines of investigation.

Listing the sequences also illustrates another break with mainstream narrative conventions - the fact that the film consistently avoids the establishment of a present time. Gili has suggested that each present tense is successively denied and put into a past tense, thereby sending us to the present

time of filming and public showing.<sup>9</sup> As this present time of filming or viewing is one in which all the doubts and enigmas are intact, the effect is to encourage reflection on elements of fabula events which explain or have relevance to the present.

The Viterbo trial of Pisciotta for the massacre of Portella della Ginestra uses numerous camera setups, eleven of which are used repeatedly, to establish relationships between characters and emphasize accusations and inferences. Here focalisation is on the figure of Judge D'Agostino whose facial expressions and gaze direction cue the veracity of dialogue statements and perception of power relationships between Pisciotta, peasants, police and carabinieri etc.

Not only is the death of Giuliano a disruption in narrative terms in that the act of violence provokes questions about Sicilian politics and society, but the existence of banditry is in itself a problem, drawing attention as it does to unresolved situations in the rural sphere. Eric Hobsbawm, for example, suggests that the ambiguity of the bandit's social situation is a sign of the presence of irreconcilable forces. The bandit is an outsider and a rebel;

"...this draws him closer to the poor... At the same time the bandit is, inevitably, drawn into the web of wealth and power, because, unlike other peasants, he acquires wealth and exerts power. ... the basic fact of banditry is that, quite apart from the bandit's need of business contacts, he forms a nucleus of armed strength, and therefore a political force."<sup>10</sup>

The figure of the bandit can therefore be used metaphorically to suggest a resemblance to the poor, and metonymically to suggest a whole system of exploitation by those in power. The



difficulties of dealing with the central character of the film are discussed by Leonardo Sciascia, who felt that, by making the bandit invisible, Rosi made his accusations against the ruling class who controlled him more powerful; at the same time, he observed that this very invisibility reaffirmed the myth of Giuliano for a Sicilian audience<sup>11</sup>.

By juxtaposing episodes from different periods, Rosi is able to suggest connections. Thus the sequences of the roundup of the men of Montelepre and the revolt of the women is followed by the visit to the cemetery of Giuliano's mother and the identification of his corpse. Her keening and shrieking accusations of betrayal are underscored by harsh music, which gives way to a voice over signalling the victory in the 1947 of the Blocco del Popolo. The visuals of this and the next two sequences document the pressganging of the shepherds by Giuliano's band and then by the massacre of Portella della Ginestra. The bandit is both of the people and against the people. The juxtaposition also allows the interlacing of Rosi's three main narrative concerns - the establishment of the truth and destruction of myths about Giuliano's career; the establishment of the socio-economic and the affective context which provided the fertile ground for the formation of myths of the bandit; and the representation of the means by which those in power used Giuliano for their own ends.

In Salvatore Giuliano we also see how the South fulfils a dual function. It is both the "Africa a casa", an example of underdevelopment and the primitive which allows exploitation to become visible, the South shorn of its myths of happy peasants and, Rosi claims, a "... chiave per capire tutta la

politica italiana successiva. La vicenda Giuliano è esemplare di tutta la storia d'Italia."<sup>12</sup> The investigation is, therefore, also not only of the disruption which the South signifies to the myth of prosperity and postwar boom, but also of collusion between power blocs which also become typical of mainland Italy.

Salvatore Giuliano is the first of Rosi's films which takes as its subject a historical person and political events.

Le mani sulla città (1963)

A group of businessmen prepare to speculate on land values by buying land which is designated as agricultural, intending then to have it zoned as for development. The collapse of a building in a poor quarter of Naples leads to the setting up of a Commission of Enquiry and investigation into how the developer of an adjacent site, Edoardo Nottola, who is also a member of the Naples Municipal Council, managed to obtain building licences. The investigation is blocked by Maglione, the leader of the right-wing Monarchist party which controls the Council. In return, Maglione asks Nottola not to stand in the coming elections. Nottola defects, with the votes which he controls, to the Centre party. De Angeli, leader of the Centre party succeeds in pacifying the right wing and reconciling Maglione and Nottola in the interests of consolidating his party's power. In spite of the objections of the left-wing, represented by Councillors Balsamo and De Vita, Nottola is elected Building Assessor, thus opening the way to more corruption and land speculation.

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Le mani sulla città returns to the linear narrative but uses

the same stylistic device of the investigation into the causes of a disturbance. The initial equilibrium is that of the reality of building speculation in Naples, represented by the declared intention of the entrepreneur, Nottola, to get the Naples municipal council to designate land purchased by his cronies and himself as development land. The collapse of a slum building in the Vicolo Sant'Andrea is the disruption which is placed in the context of the misuse of the institutions of local government in Naples and corruption rife in housing development. The building's collapse injures a child. It is a violent event which indicates that all is not as it should be and it becomes emblematic of the effects of the *modus operandi* of a certain middle class. The events motivate attempts by Socialist and Liberal Councillors to oppose Nottola. Focalisation occurs around the figures of Balsamo and De Vita, town councillors whose figures function to permit the investigation, and as a counterpoint to that of the corrupt and energetic Nottola, the cause of the collapse of the buildings of Vicolo Sant'Andrea.

Parallel to the narrative movement into the past, the investigation, is the forward movement of Nottola's quest to attain his goal which allows the showing of his corrupt methods in business and local politics, and how the system works in general. Nottola is successful in his quest and is appointed Building Assessor. Equilibrium has been re-established but the knowledge the audience has acquired prevents satisfaction at his success.

The two short final sequences echo the form of the film's opening. The investigation has revealed the root causes of



the tragedy of Vicolo Sant'Andrea but does not result in punishment of those responsible. A series of long shots over the inauguration of the building site permits us to identify the figures of De Angeli, Maglione and Nottola amongst dignitaries and churchmen, allowing us to read De Angeli's speech ironically. The final aerial views over the city and the harsh music emphasize that the story has come round full circle; a corrupt situation will continue, other tragic 'disruptions' will occur. The present tense of the end titles - "I personaggi e i fatti qui narrati sono immaginari, è autentica invece la realtà sociale e ambientale che li produce" - punches the message home.

Here the South is again a metaphor for Italy in general. Maglione represents an old style of ultra-conservative politicians who seem old-fashioned and harmless but who are ready to react violently when they come into conflict in their public (Nottola) or personal (his blonde companion) sphere. Nottola is a newer political phenomenon, greedy, unprincipled and energetic, ready to sacrifice his own son in the quest for the position he wants. Although he could be considered the classic, omnipresent central character of mainstream narrative, he is not a well-rounded character. We are not presented with back story of his personal history, psychological profile, likes and dislikes. We infer the character traits listed above from his actions, and these then motivate other actions. Bolzoni, however, identifies Rosi's as most masterful stroke the creation of the character of De Angeli, who only steps into the limelight half way through the film and, as we will see in a later chapter, embodies a new

type who will triumph over the older Maglione and the too obvious Nottola.<sup>13</sup> All these types are emblematic of the exercise of different types of power, and of power configurations which will spread northwards over the next decades.

Il momento della verità (1965)

Miguel leaves his father's impoverished farm for the city but finds it difficult to obtain work. Factory work involves paying an intermediary a percentage of his pay and, to escape this, Miguel learns the art of bull fighting in his spare time. When Miguel gets his big break he finds, yet again, that his agent profits from his work, pushing him into a punishing schedule of fights from which he is unable to extricate himself. Miguel comes to realize the strengths and attractions of his peasant heritage but dies in the arena before he is able to retire.

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Rural emigration in search of work in Il momento della verità focusses on the figure of Miguelin's career as a bullfighter. The initial equilibrium of rural backwardness and isolation is disrupted by Miguel's leaving for the city and his subsequent quest for work shows the operation of micro and macro exploitation by the prestamista and the bullfighters' agent. The enactment of his life does not conform to genre stereotypes of glamour and excitement, but explores rural poverty, exploitation of factory workers and bullfighters alike by a parasitic middle class, and sexual exploitation. Miguelin's death at the end of the film to some extent follows genre expectations and narrative closure. Many films of this

genre reach a tragic end, preferring the emotional conclusion of the violent death of the young hero to the anticlimax and banality of retirement and enjoyment of well-earned ease. These are insufficiently dramatic. After success, where is there to go? Il momento della verità escapes the usual emphasis on fate or destiny motivating events. Sequences exploring Miguelin's life stress the fatigue and monotony, the exploitation of the bullfighter by greedy and manipulative managers.

Miguelin is the classic outsider, the ignorant peasant whose character functions to allow enigmas and answers to accrue around him. As in La sfida, we see the central protagonist discovering gaps in his knowledge (enigmas), and assimilating information. The narrative is highly communicative and redundant, visual information being repeated by dialogue and presented more than once through the device of homology. Il momento della verità anticipates Rosi's later cycle of rural films. It is essentially a quest narrative where the object of the investigation is the nature of the peasant reality which is the heritage of contemporary, southern society, and the reasons for its being simultaneously the source of such rage and rebellion, yet attraction.

Il momento della verità is an example of Rosi's interest in the emigrant, a figure who is emblematic of the huge social upheavals caused by internal emigration in postwar Italy<sup>14</sup>.

The film marks Rosi's first use of Spain, standing in for all backward and oppressed Latin societies. Interestingly the female characters, representing more northern cultures in Spain, or from the anglo-Saxon world, exploit the hapless



immigrants, thus underlining the unusual powerlessness of the males, a situation to which we will return later.

C'era una volta (1967)

Adapted from the fables of the Neapolitan G B Basile, C'era una volta transports us to a magical land where reality and fantasy mix. When the poor but beautiful peasant, Isabella, falls in love with the handsome Prince Rodrigo, she enlists the help of a witch to ensure that he falls for her. The spell fails, partly because of Isabella's naturally bad temper, and partly because she is so hungry that she eats one of the dumplings intended for the Prince. The spell paralyzes the Prince and unleashes his bad temper, so that Isabella is nailed up in a barrel which rolls off with her down to the seashore.

With the help of aged witches and flying monks Isabella discovers a competition to win the hand of the Prince and makes her way to the castle to take part. Her rivals are noble princesses who are not above cheating. One of the flying saints tells her to be suspicious, she reveals the trick and marries the Prince. The film concludes with a wedding feast at which the peasants eat as if there were no tomorrow.

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Although a quest narrative, C'era una volta obeys the narrative conventions of the fairy tale and only on occasions does its mise en scène enable it to express something more. Isabella's life of rural poverty is disrupted by her meeting with the Prince, but magic spells delay resolution and the formation of the couple. The characters are delineated with

greater psychological plausibility than in previous Rosi films, but purely within generic limits and in order to motivate the plot events. The fantastic and magical elements are counterposed to what Rosi claims to be the realistic evocation of a world. The story is shot in real locations where the dust and dirt of southern peasant life are shown, and where the peasants display the misery of their existence and their fear of the absolute monarch who rules them, and the military who do his bidding. The film marks an attempt to make contact with southern culture through its manifestation in popular fable where the very down to earth mixes with the strange excesses of fantasy. Rosi will return to this world in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Tre fratelli.

#### Uomini contro (1970)

Rosi adapts Lussu's autobiography of his first world war experiences by replacing the first person narrator with a main protagonist, Lt Sassu, who volunteers for the army and is sent to the Alpine front. He finds a world of chaos which can none the less be ordered on surprising lines. He finds that the ordinary troops on both sides have more in common with each other than with their officers; and that the officers can be divided into those of the traditional sort whose sense of hierarchy and right allow them to treat their subordinates as expendable pawns in a historical game, and the younger officers who become aware that the real enemy is their superior officers. With Sassu we follow the ebb and flow of campaigns as Monte Fior is lost and retaken, trench warfare sets in, new equipment is tried out, and bad conditions tempt the troops to mutiny. Sassu's mentor, Lt Ottolenghi is shot

as he tries to bring this message home to his men; Sassu himself is court-marshalled and shot for failing to stop the shooting of an officer by men protesting at the arbitrary decimation of their companions in the name of military discipline.

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A by now familiar pattern can be observed in Uomini contro. Lt Sassu is the naïve and innocent volunteer whose arrival at the front in World War I provokes examination of events of the military campaign. The first twelve sequences function to show his education into the realities and idiocies of war, the idiocies being embodied in the conduct of General Leone. We observe his growing consciousness of class domination in the exercise of power. In a key sequence half way through the film Colonel Stringari and Major Malchiodi debate the practice of decimation as a punishment. Stringari concludes that Malchiodi and his like treat the ranks as mercenaries or ascari (colonial troops), rather than as fellow citizens. This sets the tone for the second half of the film, which illustrates this premise. The violence against the troops increases - soldiers wearing the armour plate, the "corazze Fasina", ordered by General Leone are killed, Lt Ottolenghi is shot whilst indicating the true enemy to his men, military tribunals condemn men who have wounded themselves to escape the war, Marrasi dies whilst trying to desert, Malchiodi is shot by his own men whilst trying to carry out a decimation, and Lt Sassu is court-marshalled and shot. Oppositions are embodied in the figures of General Leone and Major Malchiodi representing institutional power, Lt Ottolenghi, representing



revolutionary power, and the almost entirely undifferentiated but Southern Italian troops for whom war is a scourge like the failure of crops. Ottolenghi is, however, given a greater gestural range of reaction shots and has a helper function in the coming to consciousness of Sassu. Sassu's courtmartial and execution at the end of the film are violent narrative ruptures, the violence signifying the presence of power as it ought not to be.

### Il caso Mattei (1972)

The causes of a plane crash which kills Enrico Mattei, the Head of ENI, the State Hydrocarbon body, at Bescapé outside Milan are investigated through re-enactment of stages of his career. In the immediate postwar period Mattei fights to secure Italy's methane deposits for the nation, preferring alliances with Third World countries rather than with the "Seven Sisters", the anglo-American oil cartels. The film re-examines the testimonies of witnesses to stages in Mattei's career and the investigation of his death, and uses some to rehearse various conspiracy theories. It ends with a re-enactment of Mattei's last official visit to Gela in Sicily, leading up to the plane crash.

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Il caso Mattei (1972) and Lucky Luciano (1973) are like Salvatore Giuliano fragmented narratives which focus on key figures of contemporary society and culture. They also use the conspiracy thriller format which, as we have shown earlier, had a certain success at the time. In the former film, Mattei's death provokes an examination of the facts of his fatal accident, and a re-enactment of key episodes of his

life constitutes the material of the quest for possible solutions to the enigma of his death. As he is a representative of institutional power of the Italian State, the investigation covers the operation of power in modern Italy, the power of the mafia and of the oil cartels.<sup>15</sup>

The investigations of Il caso Mattei are multiple. Investigations by unnamed journalists, who include the Head of the Time-Life Rome bureau and Luigi Squarzina, are framed or embedded in the investigation of the film director, Francesco Rosi, who appears in his film to illustrate his method. Witnesses in earlier investigations re-enact their testimonies, a Rai 'Tribuna politica' debate seeks to investigate the financial affairs of ENI, photo-graphic and video records are framed within the frame of the screen, events in Mattei's life and reactions to his direction of ENI are enacted to provide partial answers to previous enigmas and narrative hooks.

An enormous amount of information is conveyed through the dialogues. Once again we see at work the rhetorical device of homology, where one sequence or scene will present a statement and the following sequence or scene will illustrate the truth of the first statement in a different way. At other points fluid camera movements are used to create visual interest and to punctuate otherwise very static scenes.

The search to establish causes leads to systematic examination of aspects of Mattei's working (not private) life over a period of time in which political power configurations change. Mattei's character is not developed psychologically but he is given successive opportunities to vaunt his achievements and

justify his actions in the national interest. The figure of the liberal journalist (played by Luigi Squarzina) is given the function that we have observed Mario, Lt Sassu, Miguel fulfilling in the earlier films; his questions and doubts allow some answers, and more questions, to accumulate around him. Ultimately though, when the final sequences return to the control tower at Linate at the time of Mattei's fatal plane crash, all the enigmas are in place. So too are several conspiracy scenarios - assassination by US oil companies, by the French Secret Service, by the mafia.

#### Lucky Luciano (1973)

The gangster Lucky Luciano is deported from the USA. Watching him, DEA investigator, Charles Siragusa, recalls events from Luciano's rise to power in the underworld, which start his long journey to convict Lucky Luciano of drug offences. Luciano's visit to his birthplace, Lercara Friddi in Sicily provokes flashbacks to Naples in the immediate postwar period when people with known mafia links were used by the Allied forces to assist in defeating Fascist forces. The Narcotics Bureau recruits Gene Giannini, an associate of Luciano's who has been visiting him in Naples and Pompeii, to get close to Luciano and relay information to Siragusa. The testimony of Valachi in New York, and Interpol files link the traffic in heroin to contacts Luciano makes on his rare sorties from home, mainly to European racetracks, but Siragusa has difficulty finding concrete evidence. Lucky Luciano dies of a heart attack on an airport floor after being interrogated by an Italian colleague of Siragusa's.



In Lucky Luciano, the expulsion of Luciano from the USA as an undesirable alien initiates the investigation of the links between legal and illegal power, the economics of the traffic of drugs, the reasons for mafia involvement in the US advance through Italy in World War II. Although again the protagonists are not given psychological motivation for the actantial events, they inevitably provide focalisation for hypotheses as to the reading of events through reaction shots and gaze direction. The media again function as helpers to the reading of the facts, not just through journalistic interviews/press conferences, but also through the use of television monitors to add expository material. As in Salvatore Giuliano, Le mani sulla città and Il caso Mattei, a great deal of information relating to the actual political and economic world is presented through the dialogues and Rosi uses a variety of rhetorical devices to draw attention to or emphasize points. The devices of homology and repetition are used to present information in several ways. Points are emphasized by camera movements and insistent zooms and reverse zooms, by emphatic performance codes and accumulation of details, and by startling juxtapositions. An example of the latter can be found in the sequence illustrating how the mafia "establishes peace", in which a succession of short, stylized scenes of murder end with the shooting in a barber's shop of a customer lathered up for a shave. As the blood trickles through the shaving soap and the voice over explains how Luciano ordered the Sicilian Vespers to eliminate rivals, there is a cut to Luciano laughing and clapping at this farewell dinner in the Stateroom of the liner in New York.

Into the investigation into his expulsion is embedded Charles Siragusa's search for evidence of drug trafficking upon which to convict Luciano. Dramatizations of significant episodes of Luciano's life also include press conferences and journalistic enquiries which function not only to offer additional areas of enigma but also to show Luciano's manipulation of the media to disguise his activities.

Whilst some sequences use the film noir *mise en scène* common in the gangster film, the film's emphasis is not in any way to glamourize the gangster. Muted colour tones, costume and sets stress the lack of colour in Luciano's personality, and his banality and vulgarity is expressed through action and dialogue, as in the sequence where he, Giannini and female companions visit the excavated brothel at Pompeii. Neither is there any reliance on individual psychology or heroic action. Rather the narrative is at pains to present the international and institutional repercussions of drug trafficking and Luciano's role in it.

The focus of the investigation is therefore on how Lucky Luciano achieved power, how he maintained his power, and its effects. The film does not choose to investigate the causes of the mafia phenomenon but, through quite complex organization of the visual and narrative material, suggests the link between poverty, social backwardness and conservative institutions (the Church) and the presence of illegal organizations. As we shall see in more detail in a later chapter, the investigation goes beyond the exploration of a historical period and social situation, to examination of political institutions.

Death closes the investigation but it is not the final retribution of canonic gangster narration. Luciano dies of natural causes at an airport and it is left to Siragusa and Charles Anslinger in voice-over to deliver the point that, after all the political factions have finished pursuing each other, "everyone will find himself back at the same goddamned place where he started". With no narrative resolution, no new equilibrium established, the questions remain. Reflection on the film's events will discover cues to new hypotheses and other questions.

#### Cadaveri eccellenti (1976)

The case of the shooting of Judge Varga in Sicily is given to Inspector Rogas. That murder is followed in quick succession by the deaths of Judges Sanza and Calamo and to political pressure by the judiciary and government on Rogas to produce a suspect. Rogas starts a standard investigation to establish links between the three judges, isolating three cases involving the judges where men were wrongfully convicted. The figure of Cres, the most promising suspect, proves elusive; he has disappeared and no likeness remains of him. Another judge, Rasto, is shot just after Rogas has visited him to warn him that he is in danger. This murder attracts the attention of the media, and the communist journalist, Cusan, an old friend of Rogas makes contact. Cusan introduces the notion of the presence of "dirty politics", reinforced when Judge Perro is shot and the Minister assigns Rogas to the Political Section of the Police, under the direction of Groba. Unravelling the testimonies of witnesses to Perro's murder produces the clue of the white Mercedes with Swiss number



plates. When Rogas spots this outside the house of Judge Riches, and when he also sees the official cars the military Chiefs of Staff, he puts together a conspiracy scenario. Rogas also feels himself under threat and, although he takes precautions to avoid surveillance, his meeting with Cusan to ask for an interview with the Head of the Communist Party, Amar, is recorded. Judge Riches is shot whilst he listens to a recording of the meeting. Rogas meets Amar in the National Museum; both are shot by an unseen attacker. In a television news bulletin the Head of State claims that Amar was killed by Rogas who had become overstressed by the complexity of the investigation and identification with the figure of Cres. Cusan is told by a functionary of the Revolutionary Party that this line will not be contested as the party is not ready for revolutionary change.

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Cadaveri eccellenti (1976) marks a pivotal point after which subsequent films are much more reflective and self reflexive in style. It is a large budget police and conspiracy thriller.

Like Uomini contro it is an adaptation of a well-known book. The film conflates some episodes of the book, leaves others out and develops others beyond indications in the book. Linda Coremans, in her exhaustive analysis of the adaptation has shown the differences between the literary and cinematic forms<sup>16</sup>. In addition, fundamental elements of Sciascia's narration, such as the use of a narrator and of a vividly ironic tone, undergo a transformation. This is almost entirely due to differences in narrative conventions in the

two media, and to their context of production.

Like Il contesto, Cadaveri eccellenti uses the conventions of the detective genre. Traditionally, the detective is the guardian of moral values and of justice. Detectives provide the medium through which the reader or viewer understands the mystery. They need to be outsiders and are almost always devoid of emotional attachments. Just enough of their personal life is indicated to maintain our interest and provide light relief from the complexities of the plot. It is a flexible genre, whose conventions allow it to be used in different ways. The investigation can take on a metaphysical dimension as it becomes a search for truth, an examination of fundamental concepts.

Sciascia subverts the genre. Murders in his books rarely come singly, they come in a series. The very nature of these deaths excites anguish amongst the ruling classes, because of the disturbance to the social order. Unlike the traditional giallo, there is no resolution of the disorder, no restoration of faith in the rightness and justice of institutions. Sciascia takes the investigation onto a metaphysical plane by examining concepts of law, justice and morality. As the investigation progresses, we are given very little information about the murdered judges themselves and more and more about the context of the investigation, so that the enigma to be resolved becomes not "who killed the judges?", so much as "why were they killed?"

Cadaveri eccellenti uses the conventions of the detective genre - but as applied to film. Thus we have an atmosphere of suspense and occasional threat to the protagonist, shrilling

telephones, pursuit, the urban décor, the modern architecture, the noir lighting, and the figure of the honest detective with which we are all familiar from films and television. It undoubtedly helped when negotiating this project that the film was an adaptation of a successful book by a well-known author, and that it fell into a recognizable genre.

In this respect, it is understandable that the filmed Inspector Rogas should be a very ordinary man, with moral values, rather than Sciascia's intellectual. The use of the star, Lino Ventura, is useful in providing a sort of genre shorthand to interpretation of Rogas<sup>17</sup>. The film also plays on the genre expectations of suspense and emotional involvement with the protagonist. The figure of Rogas takes on this added importance in the film because the film does not have the ironic narrator of Sciascia's book. The ironic tone and pithy, vivid language are used as a commentary in the 'hardboiled' American detective genre, but result in a concentration of attention on the detective, to the detriment of his context. Focalization in Cadaveri eccellenti is on Rogas, whose performance provides clues from which we hypothesize interpretations. There are a multitude of cue shots of Rogas looking perplexed, or ironic, or cynical, which guides our interpretations.

The first half of the film fleshes out the problem and progressively delineates the complexity of the context of the murders. Further enigmas are introduced. From the sequence in the Sicilian archive to the death of Judge Rasto, Rogas' confidence in police methods and certainty in his theory of revenge killings, are contrasted with visual uncertainties.



For example, the interview with Maxia in the billiard hall plays with mirror reflections to create an ill-defined space; and the visit to Judge Rasto places the camera as hidden voyeur inside the darkened washroom and outside on the terrace looking in. In the next nine sequences Rogas is shown as becoming progressively isolated. His certainties in the efficacy of his traditional methods falter in the face of revelations of the scope of modern surveillance and detection methods. Elements of the conspiracy genre surface in the atmosphere of paranoia. From the lunch with Cusan on the terrace to the Pattos party, Rogas is shown making sense of the enigmas, but at the expense of his confidence in his own role. Tangible threats to Rogas' safety dominate the narrative and displace the investigation, mounting towards the dénouement when Rogas and Amar are shot in the museum. The showing of their murder against a sound track of the noise of violent mass demonstrations creates a disbelief of the following official television version. The final sequence takes place in PCI HQ where the Vice-Secretary explains to Cusan that the Party will accept the official version because it is not ready for revolution. The ending is highly ironic and heavily emotional, in that the Party functionary's final statement that, "La verità non è sempre rivoluzionaria", is pronounced against the backdrop of the huge canvas by Guttuso depicting the funeral of Togliatti, one of the co-founders, with Gramsci, of the PCI, and against the noise of a mass demonstration outside. This warning about the historic compromise and the danger of contamination by corruption from the ruling classes provoked outcries from the left and right

against the film.

Ironical readings of events and characters are also delivered through satire - the interview with the Mayor at the time of the rubbish collectors' strike; the Pattos party in which the configurations of the historic compromise are shown in all their cynicism through the diatribe of the bourgeois intellectual writer, Nocio, and the confident version of the Minister; the roomful of earnest civil servants in the political branch of the police force, sitting down to read the tracts of the Gruppo Zeta.

Another strategy is to use the Brechtian alienation effect to signify disruption and/or an ironic reading. I shall return to a full consideration of uses of *mise en scène* later. The detective figure in Cadaveri eccellenti, in common with genre conventions, is not omniscient. Most of the investigation is conducted through him and he mediates most of the information for us. For example, there occur at regular intervals key speeches or dialogues extolling the virtues or values of the ruling classes, full of the absolute certainties of the rightness of their position in life and of their version of reality. At times these are counterposed to visual material which openly contradicts them, and to which Rogas has access, eg, the speech of the Mayor and the rubbish collectors; the fulsome oration on Judge Varga living a spotless life, and his spotted hands; Judge Sanza's funeral oration and the peasant's gesture likening him to the modern city, corrupt and unnatural. At other points Rogas' expressions cue an ironic reading. Later in the film, at the point where Rogas starts to perceive the political dimension to the murders, exposition

of his thought processes structures the narrative. He is shown identifying the military and civil visitors to Judge Riches, and the interrogation over which he presides sifts evidence from witnesses to the shooting of Judge Perro. The voices of the prostitute and postman answering a policeman's questions run over a black and white replay of events. In effect three reconstructions are provided, commented on by the voice-overs of the interrogation, with no other diegetic sound. There are no intervening returns to colour, the repeats being signalled in both cases by shots of the prostitute wearing the same clothes. Significantly, it is Rogas' questions which elicit the information about the presence of the white Mercedes and the unreliability of the postman's testimony, discounting the insistent official theory of "young fanatics" being responsible. This sequence marks a rehabilitation of Rogas' traditional police methods, which in turn validate his subsequent discoveries. At others the camera shows Rogas as he cannot see himself, eg, when he is framed behind bars at Judge Sanza's funeral; when the camera pulls back as if to a point of view shot of one of the statues to frame Rogas and Amar dead. We are also given diegetic inserts to which Rogas can have no access, eg, the black and white inserts of the poisoning of the Cres cat and the Cres trial; the cut-away to close ups of Riches fatal wound and his tape recorder. These provide evidence of additional frames of knowledge within the film. The ultimate frame, in which the identity of those behind the initial disruption - the murders of judges - or the final disruption - the murder of Rogas and Amar, is not communicated. The final irony of the squalid



compromise being enacted against a revolutionary painting, celebrating a life full of struggle and ideals, with the wordless roar of the demonstrating crowd outside leaves an emotional dissatisfaction and throws us back into the text by its refusal to depict political pragmatism as natural or value-free.

As we have shown, this cycle of films, whilst conforming to the conventions of genre patterns of narrative, is also one of crisis narratives. By Cadaveri eccellenti explorations of the nature of crises reach a logical conclusion in a conspiracy thriller reflecting a commonly-held disillusionment with large institutions and large power structures. The two-narrative structure which Todorov identifies as present in detective fiction<sup>18</sup> gradually loses its relevance and the thriller mode, where the two stories are fused, takes over. Political strategies take the testing of verisimilitude or plausibility which Todorov describes<sup>19</sup> and use the strategy to examine the plausibility and naturalness of constructions of social reality, thus turning them inside out and deconstructing them. A number of significant American films in this vein were imported into Italy in the early to mid-seventies and show similar preoccupations. Ryan and Kellner suggest that:-

"The ploy of hidden conspiracy is socially critical in that it does dramatize a real aspect of power in the United States. Power must not present itself as simple power unmediated by democratic participation or by the rules of populist equality of participation or fair play."<sup>20</sup>

Italian popular cinematic forms tend not to stress populist equality of participation but fate or destiny or individual strength as tools of change. The films of Matarazzo and the

cycle of peplum epics are examples of this. In the Italian context it is important to deconstruct the myths of destiny as well as the ideological masking of simple power. The success of US conspiracy films favoured the making of European versions.

Thus disruptions work to cue the making of hypotheses which will deconstruct an unproblematic reading of events, the spectator's activity being paralleled by the narrative investigation.

The anthropologist Victor Turner has suggested that tensions in society are often expressed in what appears to be a preestablished "scenario":-

"A social drama is initiated when the peaceful tenor of regular, norm-governed social life is interrupted by the breach of a rule controlling one of its salient relations. This leads swiftly or slowly to a state of crisis, which, if not soon sealed off, may split the community into contending factions and coalitions. To prevent this, redressive means are taken by those who consider themselves or are considered the most legitimate or authoritative representatives of the relevant community. Redress usually involves ritualized action, whether legal... religious... or military... If the situation does not regress to crisis the next phase of social drama comes into play, which involves alternative solutions to the problem. The first is reconciliation of the conflicting parties following the judicial, ritual or military processes; the second, consensual recognition of irredemiable breach."<sup>21</sup>

He also suggests that these social dramas disrupt everyday life and therefore "force a group to take cognizance of its own behaviour in relation to its own values". Crisis narratives thus "contain reflexive processes and generate cultural frames in which a reflexivity can find a legitimate place".

Such a scenario explains the appeal of the investigative

narrative initiated by a disruptive event and how the films considered here work to prevent reconciliation of opposing ideological views, thus keeping the texts open and reflexive. Rosi's films after Cadaveri eccellenti are also social dramas but differ from the earlier cycle in their emphasis on 'reflexive processes', memory and emotion. We will now consider modes of operation and generation of meanings about power relationships in these films.

If, as Todorov suggests, two kinds of logic can exist in any text, narrative logic and ritual logic, we would suggest that the former dominates in the early films, and the latter after 1978. Narrative logic predominates "when an ordeal occurs and we do not know how it will end; when we experience it with the hero moment by moment and the discourse remains glued to the event...". Time conforms to the notion of "perpetual present" and "the succession of events is governed by a logic proper to it, and is influenced by no external factor". Ritual logic on the other hand is characterized by the eternal return - "Here no event happens for the first or the last time. Everything has already been foretold, and now one foretells what will follow." Events and incidents relate to the past and the present at the same time.<sup>22</sup>

Rosi's films after 1978 can be characterised as investigations where no mystery exists. Leaving Carmen aside, the films show a double narrative strategy where reflection takes place in the present on a particular past reality. The roots of the present are already contained in the past. These are more self-reflexive narratives, playing on memory, recall, the presence of emotion and dreams. The project is similar but,



as we shall discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, the approach is different.

Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (1979)

In 1935 the writer, Carlo Levi, travels to a remote part of Italy where he has been exiled for his political views. The railway stops at Eboli, where he acquires a stray dog, and from there he travels by bus and car to Gagliano. Levi registers with the Mayor, who tells him to report every day and to avoid the other exiles in the town. From his lodgings Levi explores the town but he is not allowed to practice medicine, in spite of urgings to do so by the peasants he meets. His sister, Luisa, who is also a doctor visits him. Their talks and visits to the sick encourage Levi to treat patients and he moves to a new house and acquires a housekeeper, Giulia. Giulia, his paintings and medicine bring Levi into closer contact with the peasant world. He finds himself more in sympathy with, and interested in, this world than that of the Mayor or the Priest, Don Trajella. After Mussolini's victory in Abyssinia, there is an amnesty and Levi returns to Turin. Conversations with his Turin friends help him to make sense of his period of exile, but he never returns to Gagliano.

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Cristo si è fermato a Eboli was a reflective narrative when Carlo Levi wrote in the forties of his experience of political exile ten years earlier. The film, which chronicles Levi's experiences, shows the presence of the perspective of the late seventies. Levi's exile to the South constitutes the initial narrative disruption. He is the classic outsider, the

Northern intellectual placed in an alien social environment, whose curiosity and amazement motivate the exploration of that social context. In the film Levi is differentiated by his height and appearance - his class and geographic origins. Although, in common with the protagonists of the earlier films, his personal psychology is not developed, he is continually shown looking and observing and cue shots of his gaze direction constantly initiate narrative events. Again, shots of his emotional reactions to these events cue hypotheses as to their meaning or importance.

Falaschi has shown that Levi's language reveals his own ideological perspective by his constant employment of animal adjectives and similes when describing the peasants, feeding:-

"... sulla ideologia del "subumano come più umano":  
quanto più, oscura, misera, calpestata e offesa è  
l'umanità;"<sup>23</sup>

Traces of this can be seen in the film. The peasants, first seen as for the most part as undifferentiated, gradually become characters. Representatives of the piccola borghesia, the Podestà, the 'americani', and some of his fellow exiles are developed in so far as they comment on or illustrate aspects of the society of Gagliano. Showing peasant customs in their irrational or magical aspects has the same effect, and we will return to the presence of the irrational later. Both book and film display characteristics of the ritual narrative. In the film, sequences are constructed to show Levi experiencing events and meetings and also the gloss which explains them or explicates them.<sup>24</sup>

In her interesting chapter on Cristo si è fermato a Eboli, Millicent Marcus identifies a progressive change in

consciousness and at the same time personal awareness in the Levi figure. She suggests that "Rosi offers a series of folkloristic vignettes, each of which opens in a strange, even repellent way, only to close by winning our sympathies". In this way openness towards understanding a strange culture "involves a recognition of the contingency and arbitrariness of our own perceptual modes and the acceptance of equally valid alternative world views."<sup>25</sup>

More than this, the narrative is structured to make clear statements on the nature of the Fascist State whose policy was to privilege the development of the piccola borghesia at the expense of the peasants and continued under-development of the South. In this way the film rejects the stance of the typical ethnographic documentary which addresses 'The Southern Problem'. Sequence after sequence suggests that the 'problem' lies the other side of Eboli. This strategy is not without its own problems, tending as it can towards nostalgia and the uncritical celebration of more 'authentic' manners of living. This is alluded to in the relationship with Giulia, where the strength and attraction of her figure does not disguise the fact that, although she has created her own sphere of sexual action which may appear more sensual and 'authentic', she is marginalized in her own peasant society and subject to economic and sexual power relationships where Levi is concerned.

Millicent Marcus suggests that the framing scenes of Levi as an elderly man, surrounded by paintings in his studio, establish the "medium-specific nature of his (Rosi's) adaptation"<sup>26</sup>. This frame does, however, start the voice over



which is faithful to Levi's introduction and which continues as a sound bridge over the following sequences of his journey to Gagliano:-

"Sono passati molti anni, pieni di guerra, e di quello che si usa chiamare la Storia. Spinto qua e là alla ventura, non ho potuto finora mantenere la promessa fatta, lasciandoli, ai miei contadini, di tornare fra loro, e non so davvero se e quando potrò mai mantenerla. Ma, chiuso in una stanza, e in un mondo chiuso, mi è grato riandare con la memoria a quell'altro mondo, serrato nel dolore e negli usi, negato alla Storia e allo Stato, eternamente paziente...

... Cristo non è mai arrivato qui, né vi è arrivato il tempo, né l'anima individuale, né la speranza, né il legame tra le cause e gli effetti, la ragione e la Storia."<sup>27</sup>

The first part of this introduction accompanies fast cuts introducing many paintings, cued by Levi's gaze direction, mainly of women and children. The fact that Levi is being repetitively signified as an artist, a creative person, rather than a man of action, is surely important. The second part is taken up again as Levi leaves Gagliano over point of view shots of the dank, grey trees and desolate landscape of Lucania. A certain tragic tone is introduced, and the promise of critical distance, the two poles of the ritual narrative. Furthermore, the frame provides a basis for understanding the oppositions between powerlessness and power, the peasants and the Podestà, because the peasants lack a concept of history and, by implication, the critical awareness of their situation.

The television version returns to the artist's studio for the final sequences. The accumulation of expository sequences builds an understanding of the alien world, and an emotional reaction to it. The final return provokes a gloss in the

present on the continuing tragedy of the region. The strangeness of the rural, southern world which Levi discovers works against a simple, nostalgic reading. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Rosi dramatizes a complex situation, makes it strange and melodramatic. At the same time it invites a reflection on what has changed from that world to the contemporary world, most notably daily contact with the rhythms of the land and the human needs of friendship and self respect.

### Tre fratelli (1981)

An elderly farmer, Donato Giuranna, sends telegrams to call his three sons back to the family farm in Puglia for the funeral of their mother. The eldest, Raffaele, is a judge in Rome, the second, Rocco, a social worker in an institution for delinquent children in Naples, and the youngest, Nicola, is a factory worker in Turin. Nicola, who is separated from his wife, brings his daughter Marta with him and she strikes up a rapport with her grandfather. As Marta explores her new world, Raffaele recaptures some childhood memories by revisiting his old nurse, Filumena. Nicola, meanwhile, establishes contact with an old girlfriend whose husband is a guest-worker in Germany. The three brothers share a bedroom again the night before their mother's funeral. Nicola dreams of reconciliation with his northern wife; photographs from a case which Raffaele brings with him provoke a dream of his own assassination by terrorists; whilst Rocco's dreams move from his own childhood memory of the arrival of an American tank at the farm, to a world where children sweep away rubbish and drugs. Donato remembers his wedding day and an incident from

his honeymoon when his wife lost her wedding ring in the sand. In the morning Donato and Marta remain behind as the three brothers escort their mother's coffin from the farm.

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The situation of the south of Italy is also examined in Tre fratelli with the death of a mother providing the disruption which brings the brothers back to the family farmhouse in Apulia. Their presence there for 24 hours prior to the funeral allows memories and dreams to be evoked, and an exploration of the lives of representatives of different social realities. The tone of the film is more overtly lyrical and emotional. The film also manages to be at the same time allusive and didactic. The sequences where two or more characters meet and interact are marked by communicative dialogue containing a number of opinions about such subjects as juvenile delinquency, the family, marriage, work, exploitation, pollution, corruption, terrorism, the power of the media, the nature of democracy, greed, humanism, the third world, terrorism, rural marginalization, emigration, violent protest, unemployment and sexual relationships! Sequences containing one character alone are more elegiac and emotional in tone, inviting reflection on a human as well as a social situation. As we will show later, the mise en scène emphasizing the spare beauty and volumes of the farmhouse and the accumulation of details of rural life means that the film does not escape nostalgia in its reflection on the problems of the present and future.

With the exception of a couple of sequences, most notably that of Raffaele's dream of assassination, the pacing of the film



is very much slower, and the mise en scène much less dense, in that sound and visuals do not have to work so hard to explicate or display information. As we shall see in a later Chapter, complexity is reserved for an emotional appeal.

The investigations are undertaken by all of the characters, allowing the reality of southern, rural life to be interrogated. Rosi claims that calamities in the South are not so much evidence of a "Southern problem" as of concern on a national scale.<sup>28</sup> The root of current problems lies in decisions in the past such as:-

"... nel dopoguerra, fino agli anni settanta, di non industrializzare l'agricoltura nell'Italia del sud. Sarebbe stata una grande ricchezza. Invece si è pensato negli anni cinquanta di esportare molta forza lavoro dal sud verso il nord. E sono partiti dal cinque agli otto milioni di giovani. ... cifre enormi. Per il nord dell'Italia, o per la Francia, la Svizzera... Ora io credo che questo fatto abbia non solo impoverito il sud della sua forza giovane, ma che abbia creato tutte quelle conseguenze negative che io ho cercato di rappresentare nel film Tre fratelli - cioè, appunto, un certo sradicamento culturale, con il desiderio magari poi di tornare indietro. Insomma, il problema del lavoro nel sud dell'Italia è un problema più grosso da risolvere..."<sup>29</sup>

Thus the investigations of Tre fratelli seek answers in the past to situations in the present and sequences are juxtaposed according to rhetorical schemes in order to suggest connections. Those in power may have made mistakes, but they are not 'the enemy', rather they have created the conditions for the production of 'enemies of society', such as terrorists. The film does not shirk the unpalatable conclusion that it is political, social and moral marginality which creates a breeding ground for violence and anti-social action. As in Cadaveri eccellenti, death is an apt metaphor

for the state of contemporary society.

Carmen (1984)

Bizet's opera tells the story of Don José who falls in love with the gipsy Carmen when called upon to investigate a fight in the local tobacco factory. The protégée of Don José's mother, the gentle Micaëla, arrives with a message of hope that the two will marry. Her hope is thwarted by Carmen, who exploits Don José's attraction towards her, enlisting his help in her escape from custody. Don José is ruined and flees with Carmen. Even as Micaëla seeks him in the mountains, he is a part of the band of smugglers to which Carmen belongs. Carmen tires of Don José's possessiveness and strikes up a relationship with the bull fighter, Escamillo. In revenge, Don José stabs Carmen whom he has lured away from Escamillo's entourage.

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Death again informs Carmen, from the opening bullfight and hooded penitents of the Seville semana santa to Carmen's final murder by Don José. Carmen provides in many ways the apotheosis of emotion in (literally) melo-drama. The crime of passion foregrounds the conflict between personal and sensual integrity and order, duty, class allegiance. Within the constraints of a fairly faithful adaptation of the opera to the screen, the mise en scène and camera movement do generate reflections on male/female relations, masculinity and male violence. The poster for the film gave prominence to signifiers of romance, southernness, 'local colour', which is reflected somewhat in the figure of Carmen herself. For the majority audience (in the USA and northern Europe) Carmen has

been toned down. By projecting a highly sexualised performance with, judging from some critical reaction, a considerable erotic charge in some sequences, Don José's refusal of her indicates the strength of the social pressures which rule his life, and which Carmen rejects. These very qualities make her less strong at the beginning of Act III when her performance conveys petulance rather than fierceness. This Carmen does not convey the blackness and lack of beauty of Mérimée's heroine, in ethnographic terms the 'other' of southern Mediterranean culture.

Rosi himself sees the conflict between Don José and Carmen in terms of class. Carmen has the personal integrity of a woman of the people. Don José is a piccolo borghese,

"Quindi non è veramente padrone autenticamente delle sue azioni e del suo modo di vedere la vita, perché condizionato di false verità."<sup>30</sup>

His weakness, therefore, is that he is unable to express independent judgement or decisions; unlike Carmen, he is not a free and autonomous being and is unequal to the task of dominating the woman. We will return to a brief consideration of the politics of gender relations in a later chapter. This is but one way in which Rosi justified his taking on the Carmen project. The other was to impose his own, realist style. This consisted of using the buildings, towns and countryside of southern Spain as sets, rather than filming in a studio, and the meticulous recreation of a nineteenth century 'look', based on the illustrations of Gustave Doré, an attempt at historical authenticity. Whilst some critics considered that Rosi's textual research and use of realist conventions resulted in visual splendour,<sup>31</sup> others thought



that the search for the reality-effect quite ludicrous in the opera form, where 'authentically'-clothed Spanish soldiers and peasants suddenly break into song, in French.<sup>32</sup>

In our examination of Rosi's previous films we have identified the use of repetition and redundancy in order to convey complex information. This frequently takes the form of considerable complexity in the relationship of visual material, sound and dialogue within sequences, within scenes, and even within individual shots. In Carmen we see that this complexity of mise en scène is not always used to convey information, but of necessity to vary the visual material whilst the characters are singing.<sup>33</sup>

In the opera, and this film, disruption of the ordered existence led by Don José is represented by Carmen. Her difference, in terms of class, race (she is a gypsy), and morality is investigated and illustrated in order to explain the final crime of her murder by Don José. In effect Rosi's Carmen disrupts the exercise of male power and his strong stress on the social and cultural context of the story clearly signals the presence of political and ideological considerations. As Tambling suggests, Rosi's naturalistic mise en scène demystifies the heroine and makes clear that her 'otherness' is a construction of woman to serve a particular bourgeois and male-centred ideology.<sup>34</sup>

#### Cronaca di una morte annunciata (1987)

A doctor, Cristo Bedoya, returns to his home town in Colombia where his best friend, Santiago Nasar, had been murdered many years before. Bedoya starts to investigate the causes of the murder, and the complicity of the entire community in it. The

events which culminated in the murder were precipitated when an enigmatic stranger, Bayardo San Román arrived in town looking for a bride. His choice falls upon Angela Vicario, who succumbs to family pressures and marries Bayardo amid lavish celebrations. Angela is, however, returned to her father's house the next morning as her husband discovered that she was no longer a virgin. Angela names Santiago Nasar as her lover, thus obliging her brothers to avenge the slur on the family's honour. Santiago manages not to receive any of the warnings sent by the brothers, or some of the neighbours, and is killed in the town plaza. Bayardo is spirited away by his family but returns 27 years later to lure Angela to meet him at the end of a trail of her unopened letters.

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Like Tre fratelli, Cronaca di una morte annunciata is also a fragmented and circular narrative. The arrival of Cristo Bedoya in his home town after an absence of 27 years sets in motion an exploration of the death of his friend Santiago Nasar and a reflection on the nature of collective responsibility. Interspersed with the visual and aural testimony of witnesses to the crime are re-enactments of the events immediately preceeding the crime, the arrival of the stranger Bayardo San Román, his courtship of Angela Vicario, their wedding, and his return of Angela to her mother's house at dawn because she was not a virgin. Having introduced the investigation, however, the Bedoya character functions to call into the story world the testimonies of more and more witnesses with the aim of preventing the crime (the prime disruption) from being rendered 'natural' and neutral; until

the end sequences from what the script describes as 'back then' dominate over scenes of the present. Ritualized preparations for Santiago Nasar's death carry the narrative forward. The resolution is in effect the long-delayed murder, interspersed with the uneasy depiction of the return of San Román and his reconciliation with his wife, twenty seven years later. The racial as well as the personal tensions inherent in this anachronistic society are explored visually. There is not much expository dialogue, almost certainly due to the large number of extras and number of languages spoken by the principle actors and in the projected distribution markets. The investigation is, therefore, not so much into the causes of the murder of Santiago Nasar, as into the social and cultural background of latin societies. As Thomas Elsaesser has suggested,<sup>35</sup> Cristo Bedoya's investigation soon ceases to be the main focus of the narrative, and the film gains an epic and mythic dimension as it explores the nature of Latin society, the role of honour and the power of the family. Oppositions between the southern and northern worlds underpin the narrative, the southern being represented as racially mixed, a traditional and colonial culture, whilst the northern is typified as materialist and attributing value in monetary terms.

We would argue, however, that the reflections on the past roots of present events are ultimately unsatisfying because based on flawed logic. Why if Bayardo San Román is a representative of northern, Protestant, culture has he a latin name? Why is he played by Rupert Everett, who has a rather decadent, effete and subcultural persona in anglo-saxon



cinema? If Angela Vicario claims that Santiago Nasar was her "author", that her sexual awakening was due to him, why then does she live in an affective penumbra for 27 years, dedicated solely to writing letters to Bayardo? More basic to the problematic narrative of this film is the implicit premise that the virginity of a bride should matter to the world of now - as Alain Masson has pointed out, the concept of masculine honour and feminine virtue is not only indefensible, but no-one has ever defended it.<sup>36</sup>

The murder of Santiago Nasar is cued at the beginning of the film as such a senseless and absurd act that it must provoke reflection on the nature of the society which sanctioned it. Yet the enactment of the murder at the very end of the film, immediately after the reunion of the couple, provokes reflection back onto the events of the film as absurd.

Whilst the mise en scène of Carmen managed both to echo and complement the melodramatic excess of the plot by visual display and by the visual representation of the effects of male power, the element of display alone dominates in Cronaca di una morte annunciata.

#### Dimenticare Palermo (1990)

Carmin Bonavia prepares himself as a candidate for the election of the Mayor of New York. An Italian-American, he has never visited Sicily and has therefore never had to forget Palermo and become an American, like his father. He meets a young Italian journalist, Gianna, who argues for the legalization of drugs, suggesting that this would break the market for drugs and the control of the mafia. Attracted by Gianna, Carmin decides that her idea may be useful

politically, and decides to make Sicily his honeymoon destination. In Palermo Carmine is set up by the mafia boss, who plays on Carmine's Sicilian nature, his jealousy and sexual possessiveness. Carmine's wife, Carrie, is offered a gift of jasmine and these flowers keep appearing on seats, tables, on their hotel room bed, the more Carmine's obsession increases. In his pursuit of the jasmine seller, Carmine is left holding the knife after the boy is wounded in a fracas. Carmine's search for who is responsible leads him to the mafia boss, who offers to clear his name in return for abandoning the political platform of legalizing drugs. Carmine agrees, and is cleared of the crime. Reflecting on his return to New York on what he discovered in Palermo, and on the fate of the elderly aristocrat confined to the Palermo hotel, Carmine finds the courage and dignity to oppose the mafia and change his strategy. For this he is assassinated.

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The personal and the political fuse also in Dimenticare Palermo. Carmine Bonavia's decision to make the legalization of drugs one of the points of his New York electoral campaign precipitates the conflict with the forces of the mafia, embodied in the 'Man of Power', played by Joss Ackland. Carmine's parallel decision to make Palermo the destination of his honeymoon journey allows his exploration of his own cultural roots and personal identity, at the same time as the realities of present-day and past Sicily. Carmine's position as a first generation Italian American who is marrying a typical WASP, successful career woman ensures that he is doubly an outsider figure. Carrie is depicted as intelligent,

active, cynical and pragmatic. Her power as editor of a woman's news magazine is, however, constrained by mafia industrial interests, now invested in legitimate industries and multinational corporations. In America, there are news stories which she is unable to feature because the outcome would be unfavourable to particular industrial interests. In Palermo she is unable to comprehend Sicilian society or the manifestations of her husband's southern nature. Her character functions to introduce (a) explanatory material about Palermo and Sicilian society, and (b) to motivate Carmine's fight with the jasmine seller which has been set up by the 'Man of Power'.

The narrative is marked by a high level of redundancy, primarily by informative dialogue between characters representing different areas of fabula information. Once the character is placed in Palermo, sequences illustrating a progressive strengthening of 'gut' reactions over rational conduct predominate.

Reflection on past situations or social relations, or on an unfamiliar, Latin world are used to cue metaphorical associations with contemporary social realities. At their more incisive, these reflections on the past allow Rosi's continual preoccupation with power and hegemony to be addressed under the guise of a lyrical evocation of a rural world. The lure of nostalgia is, however, very strong. Staught and Turner go so far as to suggest that:-

"In short, bourgeois society which was the social and cultural manifestation of early capitalism is exhausted and with that exhaustion we are witnessing the disappearance of the possessive self and rugged individuality. As a result, nostalgia is a very



potent mode for a moribund intellectual elite adrift from its traditional culture and institutional setting."<sup>37</sup>

However, the prevalence of appeals to nostalgia in the mass media of the 1980s and 1990s would suggest that there it responds to a far more widespread desire in society.

At the same time, and fighting with the nostalgic impetus towards roots in a slower, less dehumanized world, is a tendency towards the demonization of the South. As Milly Buonanno and Erica Pellegrini have observed, the image of the "Mezzogiorno di fuoco" on television is a potent one and is associated with:-

"... il delitto, l'illegalità, la cultura dell'omertà e della violenza, le atmosfere cupe e luttuose, gli spargimenti di sangue, gli agguati e gli scontri armati..."<sup>38</sup>

The world which Carmine discovers outside his hotel door on his honeymoon trip to Sicily is the classic one of American Express advertisements - crowds, emotional foreigners gesticulating in an incomprehensible language, archaic survivals of past ages in the convent where the nuns dance the minuet, old and dilapidated buildings, arcane rituals such as the killing of the fish, dangerous alleyways and unreliable urchins, prostitutes, drug addicts, drug traffickers who shoot at each other from mopeds; even his hotel room is not inviolable and uncontaminated by the evil from outside as he finds a bunch of jasmine laid upon the matrimonial bed. As in television fiction, the South contains no positive heroes in Dimenticare Palermo. Carmine has to extricate himself from the clutches of the mafia by his own efforts, by capitulation. Once more, by synecdoche, southern criminality stands for the

whole South. The South, and southern power systems make evil visible.

## 2. Conclusions

As we have suggested in the previous chapter, the structures of the Italian film and media industries, together with Rosi's creative and technical talents have resulted in his move into the 'quality' sector of mainstream film production. Quality cinema shares with art cinema the possibility of formal innovation or of using more adventurous formal strategies. It also privileges the work of 'auteurs' who can display seriousness of purpose, or individual creativity, or consistency of themes and/or style. It differs from art cinema in its industrial mode, generally that of large budgets and creative teams, and an international and pan-media destination.

Big budgets destine these films for a mass audience. In the case of Francesco Rosi's films, his political agenda and desire to communicate clearly with a large audience lead him to make formal choices which appropriate and rework typical structures and genres of mainstream film, rather than adopting, for example, a Godardian strategy of foregrounding the means of production of the image. Those films which have a more modernist, fragmented structure, Salvatore Giuliano, Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano still share with earlier and later films the generation of enigmas and strong cause and effect logic, multiple visual, dialogue and gestural cues necessary for constructing meaning and making sense of the film.

The investigative format permits the hidden facts of the

context to be uncovered. Disruptions are carefully chosen to disturb the impression of ideological completeness. Our examination of the synopses of Rosi's films reveals that the objects of his investigations are twofold. Firstly he investigates the nature of power, its concentration in the hands of a few and wielded with a view to the permanence of those representing the status quo. In late twentieth century European society, this is a complex area which in turn generates intricate narratives and narrative solutions, and the deployment of a rich repertoire of oppositions with which to structure plot events, such as power/powerlessness, power/exploitation of the working classes, or the rural poor, North/South, modern/archaic, etc.

Secondly, it allows a continuous examination of the South of Italy and how it figures in this equation. The South of Italy is where social problems are depicted as more visible, where the soil is poorer, domestic comfort less, health care and education less, social relations between the classes more antagonistic.

These two themes and preoccupations are inflected differently from the early to the late work. Rosi's later work valorizes collective memories of the peasant past, the values of community and folk wisdom, but not without showing the tension between the values of hierarchical, archaic societies, and the modern drive for equality of opportunity.

In this chapter we have seen how Rosi developed and used the investigative format. In the absence of character-centred psychological explanations of story events, he has chosen violent disruptions or troubling events which generate enigmas



for investigation. As we have seen, these disruptions are coded for decoding against 'natural' explanations for their occurrence, that is to say that they disturb a common-sense reading of causes and effects. In addition, the enigmas in the more political texts (those made between 1961 and 1976) are consistently structured in a semantic plane where politics and ideology dominate. We have also indicated that disruptions in the films after 1976 generally initiate more reflective and self-reflexive investigations into the nature and relevance of the rural heritage of contemporary Italy.

The work of an 'auteur' must offer themes, consistencies and divergences for analysis. It must show itself worthy of analysis, discussion and debate. Rosi's work, even though using genre forms, takes as its subjects serious and complex events or issues. Social problems associated with poverty and crime, population movements from south to north, the context and political ramifications of the life of a famous bandit, building speculation in a major city, the first World War, the careers of a major industrialist involved in the modernization of Italian society and of a famous gangster, political conspiracy at the highest level, the causes of terrorism and rural poverty, the mafia.

In her examination of the rhetoric of advertising, Judith Williamson suggests how advertisements invite the receiver to participate in a 'discovery' of meaning, by filling an absence:-

"... in a hermeneutic universe, meaning is always 'absent', in that it does not reside in things, but must be interpreted through their (limited) channels: it is found in the imaginary space 'behind' them. [...] ... this meaning, supposedly

the ultimate 'reality', is in fact of totally imaginary nature; yet it is endowed with an ontological status superior to that of the concrete signifiers which are in fact our only clue to its existence."<sup>9</sup>

In the same way, investigative narratives generate enigmas which are concrete signifiers of concealed meanings. The investigations are the overarching metalanguage which makes sense of the enigmas which it has put in place. The texts therefore constitute an active participant, and an author of the enigmas.

In the next chapter we will examine in more detail the nature of these 'concealed meanings' or truths, and the cinematic strategies for revealing them.

1. FERRARA, GIUSEPPE: Francesco Rosi (Canesi, Rome, 1965) pp 15-20.
2. FARASSINO, ALBERTO: "Neorealismo, storia e geografia" in Neorealismo. Cinema italiano 1945-1949 (EDT Edizioni, Turin, 1989) pp 22-24.
3. BORDWELL, DAVID: Narration in the Fiction Film, (Methuen, London, 1985) pp 49-59.
4. Bordwell, page 157.
5. HALL, STUART: "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect'" in Mass Communication and Society, (Eds) James Curran, Michael Gurevitch & Janet Woollacott (Edward Arnold/Open University, London, 1977).
6. NICHOLS, BILL: Ideology and the Image (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1981) pp 96-103.
7. Nichols, page 96.
8. ZAMBETTI, SANDRO: Rosi (Il Castoro/La Nuova Italia, no 31/32, Florence, 1977) pp 25-28.
9. GILI, JEAN: Francesco Rosi: Cinéma et Pouvoir (Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1976) page 47.
10. HOBBSBAWM, ERIC J: Bandits (Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1972) pp 87-89.



11. SCIASCIA, LEONARDO: "La Sicilia nel cinema" in La corda pazza (Einaudi, Turin, 1970) pp 251-4.
12. DE MASI, DOMENICO: "Nel mio film non c'è la parola FINE: è una storia di mandanti e sicari che dura ancora", interview with Francesco Rosi on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Giuliano, Paese Sera, 5.7.1980.
13. BOLZONI, FRANCESCO: I film di Francesco Rosi (Gremese Editore, Rome, 1986) page 71.
14. Rosi is both interested in the situation of the immigrant who feels at home in neither new or old culture, and the emigrant who returns in search of his roots. See my interview of 28 July 1985 in Appendix One.
15. Rosi certainly saw the focus on a historical figure as the way into an investigation of a wider reality - "Così come Giuliano era una punta che penetrava il mondo circostante, permettendo di ampliare la visuale del discorso, così Mattei costituisce una occasione del tutto simile. Mattei, cioè un elemento di rottura che opera su un vasto fronte, sia nel suo Paese che fuori da esso e quindi consente di toccare nodi fondamentali della realtà contemporanea." "La ricerca multipla del regista" interview with Rosi in ROSI, FRANCESCO & SCALFARI, EUGENIO: Il caso Mattei: Un 'corsaro' al servizio della repubblica (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1972) page 75.
16. COREMANS, LINDA: La Transformation Filmique. Du Contesto à Cadaveri Eccellenti (Peter Lang, Berne, 1990).
17. Rosi described his reasons for choosing Lino Ventura to play Rogas as:- "... j'ai considéré qu'il était indispensable de créer un transfert immédiat entre le public "moyen" et ce protagoniste qui finit par devenir le héros. J'ai voulu qu'il y ait un héros sans héroïsme, un héros de qualité moyenne et donc accessible à un spectateur moyen", interviewed in CIMENT, MICHEL: Le dossier Rosi (Stock, Paris, 1976) page 173. Ventura had appeared in 61 films before Cadaveri eccellenti, his first being Jacques Becker's Touchez pas au grisbi with Jean Gabin in 1954. He starred in several films with Gabin, becoming associated with his persona. Gilles Colpart identifies a thematic shift in Ventura's films to an atmosphere in the 70s of "... indicible peur dans la cité, une angoisse de l'individu, nu et sans armes, face à des forces occultes démoniques ou meurtrières, qui président aux destinées de chacun, qui régissent le monde moderne, font peu cas de la personne humaine, sacrifie à de mystérieux intérêts la vie de qui n'est pas dans on ne sait trop quelle droite ligne imposée par on ne sait trop qui..." COLPART, GILLES: Lino Ventura (Editions Pac, Paris, 1979) page 181. Ventura was himself very conscious of his persona as an actor, "... Questa figura di uomo solitario, di ufficiale



che affronta l'equazione mafia eguale potere, mi appartiene ormai totalmente. Amo cercare e comunicare attraverso il mio lavoro, ma non sono un intellettuale convinto della finalità e delle tesi del cinema politico, del cinema d'autore che rifiuta a priori lo spettacolo". (interview with Giovanna Grassi in "Sarò Dalla Chiesa, generale lasciato in trincea" in Corriere della Sera, 28.8.83.

18. TODOROV, TZVETAN: "Detective Fiction" in The Poetics of Prose (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977) pp 46-47.
19. Todorov, pp 84-86.
20. RYAN, MICHAEL & KELLNER, DOUGLAS: Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Films (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1988) page 98.
21. TURNER, VICTOR: From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play (Performing Arts Journal Publications, NY, 1982, page 82, quoted in FISCHER, LUCY: Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1989) pp 290-293.
22. Todorov, The Poetics of Prose (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1977) pp 132-6.
23. FALASCHI, GIOVANNI: Carlo Levi (Il Castoro/La Nuova Italia, Florence, 1967) chapter 2.
24. Rosi himself described his relationship with the book in these dual terms - "Da una parte c'è la dimensione lirica e poetica, un racconto felice e libero come una fiaba. Dall'altra c'è una serie di saggi sui problemi sociali e politici del Sud, come l'emigrazione, ma anche il ruolo della donna, i giovani, la magia. Io e i miei collaboratori, Tonino Guerra e Raffaele La Capria, tentiamo di fare una opera di equilibrio e compenetrazione fra questi due piani,..." interviewed in RUSSO, GIOVANNI: "Francesco Rosi: "Nel film Carlo Levi sono io". Corriere della Sera, 17.5.78.
25. MARCUS, MILLICENT: Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism (Princeton University Press, Princeton & Guildford, 1986) chapter 15.
26. Marcus, pp 342-3.
27. LEVI, CARLO: Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (Oscar Mondadori/Einaudi, 1979) page 15.
28. DE VERICOURT, GUILLEMETTE: "Malheurs du Sud. Malheur de l'Italie", Télérama, n 1635, 13.5.81, page 29.

29. See my interview with Francesco Rosi of 28 July 1985, Appendix One.
30. See my interview with Francesco Rosi in Appendix One.
31. Jean-Michel Brèque, for example, suggests that the opera benefits from the presence of scenes of animated movement so that the music and songs are always addressed to an interlocutor or to a crowd. BREQUE, JEAN-MICHEL: "Carmen", Avant-Scène Cinéma, Spécial Cinéma et Opéra, no 360, May 1987, pp 84-5.
32. M C: "Carmen", Cahiers du Cinéma, 358, April 1984. Others found the attempts at realism a distraction - "Clouds of documentary dust... distract us from the inevitability of Carmen's death - worse - they somehow soften the emotional drive of Bizet's score." COOK, CHRISTOPHER: "Southern Comfort", The Listener, v 113, no 2901, 21.3.85, page 32.
33. Rosi considers that, whereas music can repeat itself two or three times, cinema has an implacable rhythm. "Quand une image est épuisée, on le sent immédiatement et il faut s'arrêter. Comme dans mes films jamais rien ne va au delà de la dynamique intérieure de l'image, j'ai dû résoudre un certain nombre de problèmes de longueur et de répétition." CIMENT, MICHEL: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Positif, 278, April 1984, page 8.
34. TAMBLING, JEREMY: Opera, Ideology and Film (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987) page 38.
35. ELSAESSER, THOMAS: "Cronaca di una morte annunciata", Monthly Film Bulletin, v 54, n 641, June 1987, page 164.
36. MASSON, ALAIN: "Francesco Rosi. L'évidence et le paradoxe", Positif, 316, June 1987, pp 9-11.
37. STAUTH, GEORG & TURNER, BRYAN S: "Nostalgia, Postmodernism and the Critique of Mass Culture", in Theory, Culture & Society, Special Issue on Postmodernism, v.5, nos 2-3, June 1988, page 520.
38. BUONANNO, MILLY & PELLEGRINI, ERICA: "Mezzogiorno di fuoco. Come la fiction racconta il sud", in BUONANNO, MILLY (Ed): Non è la stessa storia: la fiction italiana. L'Italia nella fiction Anno 4 (Rai/VQPT no 117, Rome, 1993) page 111.
39. WILLIAMSON, JUDITH: Decoding Advertisements (Marion Boyars, London, 1983) pp 77-78.



## CHAPTER 3

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

We have seen how disruption is signalled by the choice of narrative events and how these can be described as boundary situations, which the films' plot then goes on to contextualize and problematize. The films do not conclude with the re-establishment of an equilibrium which ties together every line of enquiry raised by the text. Even when the films conclude with a death, that death has raised more questions than the text has been able to answer. The investigation of disruptions allows the presence of enigmas to be inferred which we have suggested are signifiers of concealed meanings. As we have signalled in Chapter Two, the use of the investigative form invites the audience to participate in a discovery of meaning, of the truth of the situations depicted. It is the work of the texts to suggest that these meanings are the truth, that is, an unproblematic representation of the real world.

The problem however arises as to how, having once signalled the existence of these boundary situations, or areas of problematic interpretation, the text then suggests the authoritativeness of the alternative meaning. As a political strategy, the texts then need to signal the 'rightness' of this alternative ideological position, in contrast to that of the ideological position which was in place at the start of the film.

The solution suggested by most of these texts is to use the codes and conventions of certain kinds of realist cinema to signal the authenticity and authority of the alternative



political position, that of the implied author, Rosi, which then contests and contextualizes the position of the status quo.

We have seen how social issues and the desire to communicate a critical viewpoint have motivated the majority of Rosi's films, even if the dictates of the film industry have meant that analysis has often been achieved on the back of adaptation of a best selling book, or the life of someone rich and powerful, rather than of interpretation of a chronicle of the lower classes. We will examine some typical uses of the conventions of realist cinema to see how they establish the authority of their interpretation.

This chapter will consider how these texts function to establish the authority of the alternative ideological position. We will examine how Rosi uses the genre conventions of expository film; the codes and conventions of realist cinema - the anchorage of the visual image to cue preferred meanings, the interplay of metonymy and metaphor; the rhetorical strategies used to suggest authenticity; and the work of the metadiscourse of the investigation in the construction of an ideological position.

### 1. The justification of realism as a mode of film practice and the role of the intellectual in Italian culture

Rosi defined his own view of society and class, and his own political position as:-

"There is an old anti-progressive culture with a paternalistic and authoritarian conception of the State, but this conception is based on complicity and corruption at the level of under-State power - the sub-government, the invisible government - and it is a conception based above all on social class, the bourgeoisie in the highest position of the

government. This is a real social class in Italy, a class that defends itself and its privileges by blocking any progress, even progress on just a social level.

... I am not a militant in any political party. I am very close to the Communist Party and Socialist Party - it depends on the situation. I prefer to be a compagno di strada, a fellow traveller of both parties. The Italian political situation requires this kind of flexibility."<sup>1</sup>

and his strategy as an artist engaging his audience in the early period thus:

"Sie hatte es nötig, durch di Anklage provoziert zu werden... Denn die Realität, wie sie an der Oberfläche erschien, war eine Realität, die einige Aspekte, und die auch ihre Widersprüche verbarg. Ich habe also versucht, die Ursachen mit den Wirkungen zu verbinden. Und natürlich entsprang dieser Versuch auch dem Bedürfnis, sich, außer als Filmemacher und somit als Künstler, auch als Bürger eines Landes zu fühlen, das heißt teilzunehmen an dem, was die Funktion des Intellektuellen in der Entwicklung des eigenen Landes ist. Und zu der Zeit schien mir die Anklage mittels des Films die ... wirksamste Waffe zu sein."<sup>2</sup>

Rosi is here quite clearly stating his adherence to the principle that the role of the intellectual is to look beneath the surface of events, to discover contradictions and to link causes and effects.

Rosi describes the evolution of his concerns thus:-

"... before I was primarily interested in facts, historical events, and now I am also concerned with individuals, with the people who have lived through those events. There are two reasons for this. First, I have grown up, that is, I have matured, and the experience I have accumulated in life is reflected in my work, including this deepening of human relationships. Second, the general social and political situation in Italy is much less clear today than when I made my first films. Twenty years ago, when I made *Salvatore Giuliano* and *Hands Over the City*, my aim was to participate in public life by making films which dealt with collective problems. Reality was clearer and simpler then and I could tell stories about the collectivity, about society, by using only facts. The situation is more complex now, and one needs to rely more on characters, their interrelationships, and their



reactions to events in order to make an analysis. Many aspects of reality are hidden beneath the surface, but these aspects can be revealed through the behaviour of individuals. Ideologies are no longer sufficient to provide answers to every question."

The agenda of looking behind events, of expressing doubts and raising awkward questions still remains, but uses the personal situations of individuals as emblematic situations from which to move towards the political. This represents a shift in Rosi's perception of the world, necessitating a different approach to his subject matter.

These statements are reiterated in interviews throughout Rosi's career. They situate him firmly as someone with a political agenda, engaging with strands of left theory during his career.

Firstly, as a left-wing artist, Rosi has to take account of the Marxist cultural agenda which can be considered to be the inheritor of an enormous and influential tradition of nineteenth century European realism. As Linda Nochlin's study has shown, realism in the last century was associated with the concept of truth or honesty to an external reality and that it was considered possible to "give a truthful, objective and impartial representation of the real world, based on meticulous observation of contemporary life."<sup>4</sup>

Engels claimed that the socialist novel would be successful if "by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, it breaks down the conventionalized illusions dominating them, shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, causes doubt about the eternal validity of the existing order..." (Letter to Minna Kautsky, 26 November 1885), and that "Realism ...



implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances" (Letter to Margaret Harkness, early April 1888).<sup>5</sup> These two categories - real relations and truth of detail - have been redefined, reworked and argued out by generations of left-wing artists and critics.

As we have already suggested, the solution of the neorealist filmmakers with whom Rosi started his experience in cinema to the problem of depicting social reality was to "establish as complete a congruence as possible between its representation of reality and the lived experience of postwar Italian reality"<sup>6</sup>, through accumulation of naturalistic detail.

Many of the conventions associated with neorealist cinema can be seen to derive from traditions within Italian cinema owing their origins to previous theatrical forms or physical advantages. Assunta Spina (Gustavo Serena, 1914) shows an early use of real locations, exterior shooting and composition in depth. Neorealism's contributions to codings of actuality has been extensively documented and debated.<sup>7</sup> The "ten points of neorealism", quoted by Mira Liehm<sup>8</sup> have provided criteria against which to test the films concerned, even if few of them proved in testing, to stand up to all the criteria:-

"(1) A message... (2) Topical scripts, inspired by concrete events; great historical and social issues are tackled from the point of view of the common people. (3) A sense of detail as a means of authentication. (4) A sense of the masses and the ability to surprise ... or manipulate them in front of camera... (5) Realism; but reality is filtered by a very delicate sensitivity. (6) The truth of actors, often nonprofessionals. (7) The truth of decor and a refusal of the studio. (8) The truth of the lighting. (9) Photography reminiscent of the reportage style stresses the impression of truth. (10) An extremely free camera; its unrestricted

movements result from the use of postsyn-chronization."

More importantly for our purposes, they provide a guide to the realist conventions which subsequent generations had either to use or contest, and an indication of the neorealist obsession with 'truth'. As is by now well-known, neorealist films were generally unpopular at the box office. Some of their stylistic concerns were, however, appropriated by films of the so-called "neorealismo rosa", which also made full use of the codes of melodrama. We would, therefore, expect Rosi's films to reveal traces of both strands since his introduction to the profession took place on Visconti's La terra trema, and his apprenticeship was served not only on Visconti's films, but in the popular mainstream of the industry with directors such as Raffaele Matarazzo.

Ideas of realism were an extensively debated area of left-wing cultural politics from the 1950s onwards, focussing on the debate between the ideas of Brecht and Lukács. For Lukács, the artistic form most relevant to depicting the central issues of the twentieth century, the class struggle and emergence of the revolutionary proletariat, was socialist realism. This entailed portraying the totality of society and its pattern of development, using nineteenth century realist aesthetics, such as rounded characterisation and the use of emotional strategies such as catharsis. The artist tells of men and events in a way that involves the audience emotionally, and therefore influences the audience in favour of the struggle of the proletariat to gain power over the forces of production. The use of the "type", the emblematic

character who links the individual to the social whole, is one way of contact with the audience. Brecht however distrusted Lukács' type of socialist realism and the use of emotion. For Brecht, everything to do with the emotions had to be externalised into gesture, and realism meant "laying bare society's causal networks; showing up the dominant viewpoint as the viewpoint of the dominators"<sup>9</sup>. The audience had to be kept distanced from the action and able to make critical judgements and connections. These debates indicate that realism was not a single, unproblematic choice, but consisted of many, historically specific definitions, with which any artist had to engage.

Furthermore, for filmmakers of the postwar period who wished to make a critical consideration of society, social realities and relationships, the work of Antonio Gramsci provided an available theoretical framework. Gramsci's Quaderni del carcere were published in Italy between 1948 and 1951; his letters from 1947 onwards.<sup>10</sup> The major periods of reassessment of his work can be seen to have taken place after the primary phase of Italian neorealism and in the period immediately after 1968. The former was a period in which left wing intellectuals had to come to terms with the consolidation of Christian Democrat political power at all levels in Italy and the failure of the left to sustain the momentum of the anti-fascist struggle; and in the latter, intellectuals were confronted with the necessity of rethinking their role in relation to the working class in a struggle for social change. Particularly useful was the concept of hegemony, the process by which one class, or group of class interests, came to



dominate others. Gramsci's stress on the need to study and analyse the historical development of civil society, the means by which cultural consensus is reached, gave a role to the intellectual. It was therefore important to lay bare not just the mechanisms of political society (or how political institutions privilege the continued domination of powerful élites), but also the mechanisms by which a historical bloc, the bourgeoisie, succeeds in promoting a view in which its own ideological position comes to be seen as natural and normal. By exposing the mechanisms of power behind a position, the intellectual would raise the consciousness of the masses of their true conditions of existence. The idea was that, by studying mechanisms of power, and how power relations changed, the intellectual would bring a consciousness of how the world might be changed.

In the immediate postwar period Gramsci's ideas were extensively debated, first in the journal Il politecnico, and later in the cultural pages of newspapers and in specialist journals.<sup>11</sup>

Exposure of bourgeois cultural hegemony, and the mechanisms by which it is "transmitted via control of the media, education, advertising, the Churches and so forth"<sup>12</sup> can be attained most economically through the usage of the codes and conventions of two film genres - the documentary and the investigative thriller. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the format of the investigative thriller allows enquiry into causes of narrative events. It also has the advantage of being a popular cinematic form with a greater chance of ideas reaching a mass audience. The documentary is the cinematic genre most closely

associated with the presentation of 'truth' and 'reality', however much it may generally conceal its own ideological premises. This concealment results from the power of the indexical nature of the cinematic sign and, as Nichols has suggested, that we "seldom have the means to determine the actual degree of indexicalness or, conversely, of fabrication, at more complex levels than the mechanical fixing of light patterns on film..."<sup>13</sup>. The process of selecting authenticating evidence is rarely shown, thereby concealing the mediation which has taken place.

As we will show in Chapter 4, debates about realism in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not reflected at more than a surface level in Rosi's films. As Terry Lovell has indicated in her work on the different strands of theories of realism in Marxist thought, resolution of the problems of realist conventions in the service of socialist aims<sup>14</sup> was hotly debated in the period around 1968 when the role of the intellectual was again felt to have an importance in political struggle. Those who embraced Althusserian aesthetics considered that mainstream cinema concealed its ideological address by illusionist strategies. Political cinema had as its task to make plain the construction of the illusion of reality, and to maintain an active viewer whose pleasure would lie in identifying the dialectical process at work. The cinema of those whose aesthetic strategies was based on the conventionalism of Althusserian aesthetics, was in consequence outside the mainstream of the film industry, relying as it did on a minority audience familiar with the theoretical positions underpinning artistic choices. Lovell suggests that the flaw

of political cinema circa 1968 was that:-

"Although we can only talk about, or represent, those real things within some signifying practice or another, what is said within those practices depends for its validity not on the signifying practices alone, but on properties and qualities of the things referred to or represented."<sup>15</sup>

As we have seen in Chapter One, Rosi's apprenticeship started in neorealist cinema and gave him a clear interest in a social cinema which took societal problems as its subject matter and used the conventions of realism as an appropriate strategy to stress the authenticity of the world depicted. We have seen, moreover, that by this period he was firmly established in a sector of the Italian film industry which produced social dramas for a large, art cinema audience. Although Rosi does use some Brechtian distancing devices in his films in the 1970s, he is neither of the generation, nor at the stage of his career to change his style and make low-budget, avant garde films.

As we have observed, there has been an evolution in the subject matter of Rosi's films over the years. Rosi now maintains that a more complex political, cultural and social situation since the mid-seventies has necessitated a greater emphasis on characterization in his later films. The South of Italy is a constant concern in Rosi's films and Rosi insists that the more lyrical treatment of the Mezzogiorno in the 1980s can still reflect a desire to understand a society through its cultural and social context.<sup>16</sup> As far as the film industry is concerned, however, this development has coincided with a falling out of fashion of the 'film di denuncia' until fairly recently, as can be shown by box office receipts. The



return to treatment of polemical issues (the legalization of drugs, the exercise of power legally and illegally) in Dimenticare Palermo revealed that the ambition to link cause and effect and to engage with current issues is still there.<sup>17</sup> Rosi's move to treating the relationships between characters and acknowledgement of more complex social and political situations can be seen to be part of a wider cultural development. The last ten years have, however, seen what Lyotard has described as "incredulity towards metanarratives", characterized by "the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation"<sup>18</sup> which prefigured the actual break-up of the Soviet Union. In the next Chapter, we will compare the cues generated within the early and later texts which appeal to our knowledge of the real world to see if there is a qualitative difference in the authoritativeness of the over-arching ideological position.

## 2. The documentary mode

### Exposition and ideology

Several of Rosi's films have been criticized in the past as 'mere' documentaries (Salvatore Giuliano, Le mani sulla città, Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano primarily). Rosi himself preferred the term "realtà documentata"<sup>19</sup>. This criticism reflects the difficulties most critics have in defining the difference between narrative and expository cinema. The films under discussion are all mainstream feature films in terms of their exhibition destination, rather than documentaries. As we have indicated, their agenda of revealing hidden meanings implies that the texts must persuade us of their own authority. The desire to persuade brings with it the

necessity of recourse to the conventions of the exposition of arguments. I have not used the term, 'non-narrative' cinema because, as Bill Nichols suggests, it is not useful. "Exposition and narrative - and poetics - are not exclusive; all three can figure into the textual system of a given film."<sup>20</sup> Certainly Roger Silverstone's work on 'Horizon' documentaries bears this out. Silverstone shows how the institutional practice and processes of the BBC, and journalistic practice impose not only typical story structures, but also ideological inflections within narrative in 'Horizon' programmes.<sup>21</sup> Programmes are structured in a similar fashion to Proppian patterns of initial enigma or lack, quest or search to solve the enigma/fill the lack, leading to final resolution/position of full information. These are, therefore, closed narratives, where the final resolution closes off all lines of enquiry and imposes a solution which explains most, if not all, of the enigmas raised earlier in the film.

For Nichols, it is "the pragmatic thrust of rhetoric toward persuasion" which places it inside an ideological arena.<sup>22</sup> This is because the discovery of sources of argument to support a case depends not only on factual material but also on the artistic intervention of the 'speaker'. Nichols' examination of the three Aristotelean categories of artistic persuasion are helpful to analysis of Rosi's rhetorical strategies:-

- "1. ethical - dependent upon the audience's estimation of the speaker's moral character or credibility as a function of the exposition;
2. emotional - dependent upon the speaker's appeal to the audience's emotions to produce a certain

disposition;

3. demonstrative - dependent upon the exposition's recourse to real or apparent demonstration."<sup>23</sup>

The denotative force of the 'realism effect' generated by Rosi's films is certainly enhanced by a two-fold emotional appeal - the indignation of the implied author, and the emotions generated by specific actions and in relation to specific characters. As in Visconti's and neorealist cinema, the means for generating the emotional appeal which aids the comprehension of the meaning of the social world is melodrama. The predominantly linear arrangement of most mainstream narrative film is not necessary to expository film. The disposition of arguments in the latter follows the logic of persuasion. Thus, for example, in Salvatore Giuliano, sequences are organized to explore answers to the enigma established in the opening sequence, 'Who killed Salvatore Giuliano', and to persuade as to his dissimilarity to any Robin Hood figure. We have mentioned Jean Gili's study of how the arrangement of the sequences thwarts identification with the bandit figure by (amongst other strategies) denying the spectator the establishment of a constant 'present time' as a point of reference.<sup>24</sup> Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano also use flashback structures and/or media inserts to build up a complex context which can be brought to bear on the initial enigma or disruption.

The investigative form has an epistemological function in that Rosi is concerned to examine not only the truth of representations but also how we know what we know and, if there are gaps in our knowledge, why the truth is concealed or not plain. By placing the investigations in the field of



social or political issues, such as emigration, the inter-relationship between legal and illegal power, terrorism etc, and by the nature of the disruptions initiating the narrative, this type of cinema signals these questions as relevant.

### Genre conventions

#### Mode of address

We will now examine some examples of how Rosi uses the conventions of realist cinema.

The logic of exposition dictates not only the use of the investigation, but also informs the structuring within sequences. In the following example from Salvatore Giuliano we see how the mode of address shapes reception of the visual material.

In this sequence we see the classic direct address of expository cinema. The voice off authoritatively delineates the context in which Giuliano operates, its geography, politics and methods. The mise en scène illustrates the soundtrack in a long take, which establishes in long shot the physical environment. Camera movements emphasize points made in the voice over. The voice-of-God in non-synchronous sound is that of Rosi himself, and it is combined with visual material which illustrates the argument of the soundtrack, using the classical rhetorical device of homology:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<u>vo:</u> Quest'è il piano intorno a Montelepre. Paesi uno dietro l'altro; Giardinello, Torretta, Carini, Alcamo, Partinico e, a pochi chilometri, Palermo. La montagna lunga di Sagana, il monte Calcerame, Monte d'Oro.	/els valley & mountains. pan left over terrain  pan l continues to include mountain

	Il regno di Giuliano, protetto dall'omertà, dalla passione, dal terrore.	pan l to village, reverse zoom
	Montelepre è sotto la montagna. Si vede la gente per le strade, se ne sentono le voci: dalla terrazza della sua casa arrivano a Turiddu le segnalazioni della madre. Il paese è pieno di carabinieri, ma il bandito è imprendibile. Una radio da campo avverte il colonnello degli spostamenti a distanza; mortai e mitragliatrici pesanti proteggono il piccolo esercito di banditi e fanatici separatisti. Dall'alto della montagna ogni movimento è controllato e prevenuto: le lunghe strade bianche di polvere sono sotto il tiro dei fucili di Giuliano. Nell'altra parte della Sicilia, nel versante orientale, in quel 1946, un reparto di soldati ha avuto subito ragione delle bande separatiste; resta però nel suo regno il Rè di Montelepre.	zoom to village  pan l over village  pan to houses & road  pan to roads  pan follows line of roads  pan forward  pan up to cliff  pan l to include Giuliano full figure on l, surveying scene with binoculars
0.30		/ms G with binoculars
0.32		/els view below from G's pov. Zoom following movement of G's binoculars
0.33	motor noise	zoom in on road & army trucks /cu interior truck, soldiers dark against white houses, their faces are stolid & impassive; pan l past heads to show narrow streets, pan l to show view through windscreen
0.41		/mcu soldiers front view pan l over profiles with villagers scattering in street in ls beyond them
0.46	Woman 1: E surdate! E surdate! E surdate! motor noise	/ls street, truck passes at top, villagers rush indoors /ls stepped street, mother rushes down, gathers child.
0.48	Woman 2: Liuccia, Liuccia! E surdate!	

	<u>Man 1</u> : Dentro, dentro, dentro. Avviso a Pinuccio, avviso a Pinuccio	Pan r as takes child to family group at door, pan down following man's gesture to herdsman & flocks in street below
	<u>Man 2</u> : Vabbene, vabbene street noise	
0.51	<u>Woman 3</u> : Trasi, trasi, Maria, trasi.	/int dark, lit window. Mother rushes to gather up child, shuts window
0.53	shutters bang	/ms shutters close pan up to activity on balcony
0.54	<u>vo man</u> : E surdate! E surdate. shutters bang <u>Man 3</u> : E surdate. E surdate. Chiudite 'o finestrone, chiudite 'o finestrone	/int ha ls man in doorway tilt & pan up in dark, pan l to follow man rush to close window of darkened room
0.56	<u>Maresciallo</u> : Ma che succede? <u>Brigadiere</u> : Gridano che sono arrivato i soldati.	/ls street, pan up to mcu two carabinieri, pan r as go indoors
0.62	<u>Priest</u> : Maria!	/ls ha street from terrace, pan l to include Priest pa, pan l to follow him as goes indoors.
0.65	<u>Maresciallo</u> : Ma porca miseria! Ma avvisassero almeno una volta! Qui la gente le cose le fanno sempre prima di noi. <u>Brigadiere</u> : Si capisce. Giuliano l'ha la radio e per noi è problema telefonare a Palermo... <u>Carabiniere</u> : Maresciallo, l'aspettano in comune. <u>Maresciallo</u> : Mandami Tomasetto e Comito.	/ls maresciallo & brigadiere in street, track r & diagonally as they walk towards camera gesticulating
0.71	<u>Carabiniere</u> : Sissignore!	pan r as turn corner. Met by young soldier, salutes, gives message, runs off towards camera.

The voice-over establishes its authority by linking deictic markers of context (questo, dall'alto, sotto) to camera movement, asserting a congruence between what is shown and what is said. The first half of the sequence ends with a visual transfer to the figure of Giuliano, his face obscured



by binoculars he holds to his eyes. The binocular point of view of the next two shots establishes the metaphor of control. The motor noise then signals another transfer to the soldiers; the *mise en scène* is claustrophobic, emphasizing a limited viewpoint in contrast to that of the bandit. Camera movement then makes another transfer to the villagers, with the presence of army trucks at the frame edge reinforcing their presence as the cause of the villagers' panic and fright. The accelerated editing rhythm reinforces the impression of panic, whilst also delivering further shots of flight and concealment. The dark tones and incomplete viewpoints add to the depiction of fear and suspicion. Camera movement makes a transfer from the streets to the carabinieri and also to the priest, representatives of institutional control, neither of whom are shown to have prior knowledge of the military arrival. The reaction of the priest is ambiguous, but could suggest some complicity in the omertà mentioned by the voice over. The final shot uses humour to echo the claims of the voice over.

The second half of the sequence is constructed to illustrate the truth of the statements made in the voice over. We are shown Giuliano's supremacy over the military in his control of the mountain heights, by superior weapons and communications and by his hold over the populace. The expressions of panic on the part of the villagers contrast with the impassivity of the soldiers, giving rise to a symbolic contrast between oppressors and oppressed, power and powerlessness. Throughout the film the oppression of ordinary people is emphasized - by Rome, by the police and carabinieri who represent the State,

by the bandits and by the mafia. It is the eternal problem of the underdeveloped South of Italy which recurs in all of Rosi's films. The authority of Rosi's voice-over structures a reading of the bandit as a criminal, rather than Robin Hood figure. Authorial authority masks the constructedness of this truth.

The rhetorical device of homology recurs from film to film. It represents the rhetoric of persuasion allied to the style of realism. It is not usually structured by voice-over assertion, but by indirect assertion or hypothesis. Its usual form is to have the second half of a sequence demonstrating the veracity of the information given in the dialogue of the first half. There are many variations; in Le mani sulla città, for instance, where Nottola reads a newspaper denunciation of his activities, which are then 'proved' by his dialogue and action; and in Uomini contro Ottolenghi's judgement of the danger from the Austrians is illustrated in the following sequence by the death of Lt Santini.

Salvatore Giuliano is not a documentary although it uses many of the techniques of expository cinema, the use of the rhetoric of persuasion; the chain of sequences arranged to cue areas of investigation or knowledge; voice-over narration; witnesses of events. The inhabitants of Montelepre etc bear witness to their social roles outside the film, but there are also 'helper' figures (in the Proppian sense of figures functioning to resolve areas of lack of knowledge) which appear at various times to conduct us through the narrative and cue certain hypotheses. The journalist from Rome, the carabinieri Marshal, Judge D'Agostino at the Viterbo trial are

examples.

Documentary exposition commonly uses a variety of graphic, and now computer-generated, devices to enhance the persuasive strategies of image and dialogue. We see an example of Rosi's use of these devices in Il caso Mattei, in the sequence where Mattei lights the methane gas jet. The sequence starts in close-up on a large signpost announcing that this is the AGIP research establishment at Cavriaga, moving to long shots of the moment of the discovery of methane gas. The long shots allow a contrast to be shown between the gas workers on the derrick and the peasants in the fields. Mattei arrives from Milan at dusk and, in a wide-angle long shot of great visual beauty, makes the symbolic gesture of lighting the gas jet. In the light of the flame, the fields appear intensely green and gold, the sky very blue. The line of watching peasant women retreat in fear at the sight and sound of the roaring flame. Over a freeze frame of Mattei's triumphant gesture newsprint titles appear announcing the effect on Italian industrial development of the exploitation of this fuel, and newspaper reports of Italy's winning the petrol war.

This entire sequence expresses the point that traditional peasant society is being supplanted by technical progress. In relation to the previous sequence where Ferruccio Parri testifies to the importance for Italy of having control over its own fuel sources, the Cavriaga sequence cues a preferred reading of Mattei's actions as correct. In relation to the following sequences of official investigations into Mattei's plane crash, and confrontations with US oil men, the Cavriaga sequence signals the huge economic importance that ENI



assumed, and that the figure of Mattei must be read in a national and international context from that point on.

With Cristo si è fermato a Eboli the authenticating discourse changes in degree. The later films do not marshal facts and the testimonies of the famous, but use the words of ordinary people to illuminate an idea or a situation. In Chapter Two we have identified the narrative device of the character who is ignorant, or who doubts and whose presence allows questions and possibilities to be examined and suggests the presence of the hypotheses which are also structured into the texts: Thus, Rosi's statement that "non esiste la questione meridionale, esiste la questione nazionale"<sup>25</sup> is, in Tre fratelli illustrated by the symbolic use of television screens in the village bars. On one occasion, television news of the murder of a worker provokes a discussion between Judge Raffaele and his former schoolfriends on collective responsibility; on another news of an assassination flickers on the television screen in the bar where Nicola buys his cigarettes after visiting his old girlfriend. We are being shown a situation in a rural world which is connected to these other diegetic spaces where violence and social breakdown occur.

These documentary conventions allow a large amount and variety of information to be presented simultaneously in several ways. The device of homology, which allies the force of image and sound track, in particular allows persuasive statements to be ostended with great authority.

#### Direct address to camera

Direct address to camera is rarely used in the cinema, except

in particular forms of political cinema, such as counter-cinema, as a Brechtian strategy of alienation.

Direct address to camera is used often in Rosi's films - when Totonno (Alberto Sordi) talks to camera at the end of I magliari; in the sequence in the Milan Bourse (which follows the Cavriaga episode described above) in Il caso Mattei, as the journalist, Benelli, concludes his questions with the remark, "La gente non sa mai nulla di quello che c'è dietro i fatti...." and turns to look into the camera; in a several sequences of Cronaca di una morte annunciata when Cristo Bedoya arrives back in his home town and starts his investigation, a 'continuity' point-of-view structure concludes with a look to camera; at other points he addresses the camera directly. These examples undoubtedly jolt the spectator, breaking cinematic norms as they do. Part of the unease generated by these examples must derive also from the effect of immediacy, which John Ellis has identified as a standard code of television news<sup>26</sup>. The spectator is being interpellated, called into the unfolding narrative. At points such as these the text moves onto what Jakobson designates the conative register to persuade of and cue the authenticity of the meanings uncovered by the enquiry.<sup>27</sup>

### The use of the journalistic enquiry

We have suggested that one constantly recurring element in Rosi's films is the presence of journalists. Journalistic interviews and enquiries, press conferences, the construction of television programmes have several functions. In the earlier films where characterization is subordinate to the social or political function of the protagonists, other

communicative relationships with the spectator have to be developed. Journalist figures have the narrative role of generating enigmas. They also have a 'helper' function in presenting quantities of complex information about the diegetic world in a plausible manner. They also help to anchor the visual image and to cue connections to experiences in the real world.

One journalist figure in Salvatore Giuliano, for example, is used to elicit the information that there is a discrepancy between the official version of events and the memory of townspeople of Castelvetro who heard the shots during the night of Giuliano's death. In the short, third sequence of Le mani sulla città a journalist interviews three notabili. His two questions, about an alliance between Centre and Right factions in the Municipal Council and the amount of money available from central government for land development, suggest a connection between the two facts.

The depiction of these journalistic events draws on several codes and conventions of television actuality reporting - the crowd, babble of voices asking questions, the object of questions often partially obscured by cameras or other people, hand-held camera, shooting against the light, fluid and unbalanced framings, the rather flat delivery and self-important look of ordinary people being interviewed, the shiny corridors and entrance steps which feature in interviews with those representing institutions. They generate a powerfully realistic effect through this use of journalistic codes.

Press conferences and scenes with journalists are also used to show how those in power manipulate the history of events, the



truth. In Lucky Luciano, the gangster's Naples press conference is structured to show his skill at misinformation and downright lies and evasions. Elements of his performance (his choice of words and emphasis of them) also connote his vulgarity and dishonesty. The performances of the press corps around the table also illustrate the strange collusion between sections of the press and public figures which contributes to the building of a myth.

From film to film, therefore, journalists are used as a narrative device to present information and enigmas in the investigations. They are also used to illustrate the manipulation of the media which is part of the hegemonic process. A very overt example occurs in Dimenticare Palermo when an early report of the death of the jasmine seller implicates Carmine Bonavia, and the television report after Carmine has capitulated to the 'Man of Power' exonerates him. Mafia infiltration into areas of legitimate business and the exercise of its power is neatly set out. Such examples are part of epistemological strategy of the films. The journalistic enquiry is a metaphor for the larger investigation of the film and often indicates why we are in ignorance of the facts, why enigmas exist, in whose interests it is that we should not know.

#### The mobilization of witnesses and authorities

Salvatore Giuliano, Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano reconstruct actual events and the context of real lives. They are thus able to use one of the strategies of expository film, which has earlier been described as belonging to the categorical of ethical persuasion - that of using a range of

witnesses to substantiate an argument.

In a later section we will examine how Rosi makes connections between the world of politics and the diegetic world of his films but our aim here is to examine generally how Rosi uses witnesses and authorities, and adapts the strategy for fictional events.

Salvatore Giuliano uses what purport to be actual witnesses to the events of Giuliano's killing, to give an alternative view to that of the police. The inventory of the bandit's corpse and the Viterbo trial are enactments of pieces of evidence, in a manner familiar in documentary.

Several well-known journalists appear in Il caso Mattei and, although not named, their aims, and opposition to Mattei's power are made obvious through the dialogue. They constitute iconic signs which refer immediately to their actual function in the world 'out there', and metonymically to the news gathering process. Their function is to provide a critical interpretation of the dominant version of events and, in the case of those in the Time Life bureau, to give the international perspective - that "l'italiano più potente dopo Giulio Cesare" is worth a 500-word obituary. Rosi himself appears in the film performing analagous actions, a rhyming which links the two activities.

Television also plays an important part. We have already shown how the media are used to exemplify the construction of a hegemonic situation. Il caso Mattei also uses televised interviews and the direct witness of such as Ferruccio Parri, Michele Pantaleone, Arrigo Benedetti. The names of other real people - Don Sturzo, Scelba, De Gasperi etc are evoked through

black and white photographs. For a non-Italian audience the names are not contextualized or explained. Their presence is generic; they have an indexical function as informants to cue particular historical periods and political standpoints.

In Lucky Luciano, enactments of the testimony of witnesses transcribed in institutional contexts are cued by titles, "The United Nations", "Paris, Interpol Headquarters", etc. The main witness to the authenticity of the facts presented is, however, Charles Siragusa, played by himself. His 'character' is an iconic sign of the presence of the 'real' investigator, and of the authenticity of the events portrayed.

These strategies are also mobilized in other films to generate a witness-effect. Carlo Levi's conversations with peasants about the husbandry of olive trees, the payment of taxes, the life of bandits, in Eboli resemble interviews. In Cronaca di una morte annunciata the juxtaposition of the figure of Cristo Bedoya in the abandoned archive with photographs and voice-off sound giving testimony to the murder of Santiago Nasar is a poetic use of the documentary method.

As we shall see in greater depth in a subsequent chapter, photographs are part of the mise en scène of almost all the films after Salvatore Giuliano. The bandit's mother is seen muttering before a close-up photograph of her son, almost as if to a religious icon, one of Rosi's methods for suggesting how myths are created. Photographs in Le mani sulla città of the dignitaries around the model of the development site are used later in the film to bring that diegetic space into play during a confrontation between Nottola and Maglione; large photographs of modern architecture in Nottola's office are



used both to suggest symbolic contrasts between development and underdevelopment and at the same time, to connote the stakes for Nottola's business. The mise en scène of Il caso Mattei repeatedly uses photographs and video screens as concrete evidence against which to test official and unofficial theories about Mattei's plane crash. In Tre fratelli old Donato Giuranna shows Marta photographs, offering her a picture of continuity and family links. The difference between Carmine and his wife Carrie in Dimenticare Palermo is encapsulated in the fact that he watches and looks about him whilst she (being a magazine editor) sees things through a lens, continually seeking to frame and control what she sees on the streets by photographing it. For Rosi:-

"... c'est notre civilisation de l'image. Une photo, c'est le témoignage de quelqu'un, d'une époque, c'est un moment arrêté de la vie de quelqu'un qui continue à vivre."<sup>28</sup>

Photographs are an important tool, signifying by their very iconicity, the presence of witnesses.

Analogously the dead provide powerful iconic signs of their presence, whether 'real' (as in the cemetery in Lucky Luciano where the camera pans over tombs at a pace allowing messages to be read - (Cancemi Giuseppe, vittima innocente di mano crudele e senza scrupoli, etc), or imagined (the tomb of Santiago Nasar in Cronaca di una morte annunciata).

These all constitute part of the "rich repertoire of forms for the author's voice"<sup>29</sup>. Ricoeur has pointed out that the interplay of 'real' history and fictional events is common to many types of narrative and generates the impression of realism and the construction of a plausible world of the

narrative. He suggests that the gap between the time of the world and lived time is bridged only by specific connectors which serve to make time conceivable and manipulable.<sup>30</sup> Rosi's films mobilize these connectors - the calendar, documents and archives, the succession of generations, traces of the past in the present - and the film texts thereby firmly situate themselves in history. At the paradigmatic level, all the devices mentioned in this section are indicative of the drive towards establishing the authenticity of the text, and the reliability of the author. In fact, the narrative disruptions indicate that the entire aim of the texts is to struggle against the effacement of these traces, hence the importance accorded to memory and witness.

#### Repetition and redundancy

David Bordwell has shown how repetition and redundancy are essential to almost all film narratives (with the exception of some forms of counter-cinema and the avant garde) in order to provide multiple cues for the formation of hypotheses as to narrative development.<sup>31</sup> This is especially important for a type of political cinema which relies on the transmission of a large amount of information about society, to a mass audience, hence the importance of the spoken word in most of Rosi's films.

Both Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano, for example, although marketed as political films, were aimed at a mass, prima visione audience in Italy and abroad. They therefore frequently repeat not only names, but descriptions of institutions such as the Kefauver commission.

The rhetorical device of homology which we have examined

earlier is another example of redundancy, since it allows information to be presented in more than one way.

Cliché is another method of redundancy - an early sequence in Lucky Luciano is introduced by the title, "Naples" over a long shot of octopus boats on the deep blue water of twilight. A reverse zoom includes Luciano in frame in medium shot, with Vesuvius in the background. The camera pans and tracks him as he moves along the harbour to the accompaniment of a rendition of Santa Lucia on the soundtrack. Similarly, in the same film, an establishing shot of a bridge over the Hudson and the New York skyline are clichés which work metonymically to suggest a chain of associations around notions of the urban, New York, the American, and also metaphorically in suggesting that Luciano's power and evil depend on the existence of the urban world.

Accumulation is another rhetorical figure which functions at this level, linked, as we shall see, to the notion of metonymy. In Le mani sulla città the decors of the houses of Maglione and De Angelis display an accumulation of details which repeatedly connote a certain lifestyle and attitude. In Cronaca di una morte annunciata details of the flora and fauna of Colombia, the fruits, the architecture are accumulated to signify tropicality, which is repeated aurally in the latin American dance music, and gesturally in the extravagant actions of the participants.

This latter film shares with Uomini contro narrative reliance on action and visual exposition rather than dialogue. Sequence after sequence in Uomini contro repeats its basic premise that the real enemy of the soldiers fighting on the



Alpine front in the first World War was their senior officers, narrative motivation being given by the gradual raising of the consciousness of Lt Sassu.

### Spatial realism

Spatial realism was early identified as one of the distinguishing features of neorealist cinema. André Bazin, for example, supported the use of what he called "respect for the spatial unity of an event at the moment when to split it up would change it from something real to something imaginary"<sup>32</sup>, defining this as a move away from editing towards depth of focus, the long take, camera movement such as pans to explore space and the relationship of figures within it. His justification for his aesthetic preference was that montage led the spectator passively towards a conclusion, whereas spatial realism not only could claim a relationship of 'truth' by contact with the profilmic event, but also made the spectator work harder to decipher the contents of the frame.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently critics have shown that the deep focus shot is not necessarily more ambiguous than sequences orientating the spectator by use of editing, and that, indeed, neorealist films often based their tight narrative order on montage. The films under discussion use these conventions in a variety of ways and we will argue that depth of field is but one device whereby information may be communicated simultaneously. The secondary text is important to establishing spatial realism by insisting upon the authenticity of places and people. At various stages during pre-production, shooting, post-production and launch of a film, and subsequently upon re-release or television release, the publicity machine or

media debate makes a point of alluding to the fact that real locations or people have been used; that such and such problems in gaining permission to film in actual streets a fictional terrorist murder have been overcome, and that members of the anti-terrorist squad involved in an identical incident had watched the day's shoot; that actual court records have been used in the screenplay, etc. Rosi filmed Salvatore Giuliano in the places where the events of the bandit's life took place; Le mani sulla città was filmed in Naples and the Municipal Council chamber reconstructed in a studio of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia; locations for Cristo si è fermato a Eboli were found in three villages in the province of Matera - Aliano in the house where Levi had lived, Craco to show the effects of landslides around the church and the narrow streets, and Guardia Perticara near Potenza.<sup>34</sup> Published interviews and books have also stressed professionalism in attention to detail, and have reproduced photographic evidence to justify a particular mise en scène.<sup>35</sup> In the previous example from Salvatore Giuliano we have observed how camera movement mimics the movements of Giuliano's binoculars to explore the landscape. The voice-over delivers a powerful cue to realism by enumerating and displaying topographical elements. Its illocutionary force is that of assertion and provides deictic orientation towards the context. The landscape, buildings, roads etc stand metonymically for the world of Montelepre, and, by extension, that of Sicily.

The following example from Il caso Mattei we see the use of authenticating detail and the reportage style. Observation of



markers of tense in the dialogue and their interplay with the black and white photographs indicate how the text contrasts the present context where questions and doubts suggest an absent meaning, and a past time from which photographic evidence emanates, and which constitutes another level of discourse. The transcription shows how camera movement is used within deep focus shots and how the investigation is orchestrated by editing:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<u>General</u> (vo): Ormai sono passati troppi anni dai lavori della commissione d'inchiesta che...	/cu bw photo trees & wreckage, another bw photo placed on top of 1st
0.03	bisognerebbe ricostruire tutto l'iter che abbiamo fatto allora. Vede ...  noi abbiamo esaminato tutto, non abbiamo trascurato nessuna ipotesi... naturalmente prima di tutte quella del sabotaggio ... tanto per parlarci chiaro... Guardi, guardi le foto. L'incidente è stato (vo) attribuito a perdita di controllo in spirale destra: non è stato possibile però accertarne le cause <u>vo Colonel</u> : Guardi.	/ls large room, General on ornate sofa lh side rear, journalist rh side rear, table with lamp between them. Pull in to ms of both  Gradual track in & slow reframe  reframe on journalist ms who takes photos & looks at them
0.21	0.21 stato (vo) attribuito a perdita di controllo in spirale destra: non è stato possibile però accertarne le cause	/cu bw photo of wreckage from edge of table
0.23	0.23 <u>vo Colonel</u> : Guardi.	/cu bw photo, pull back out of focus
0.28	0.28 Il carrello è dentro e così i flaps, e così gli aerofreni.  Non c'è alcun segno che dimostri l'inizio di manovra. <u>vo General</u> : E allora, secondo lei?  <u>Colonel</u> : E caduto in vite. Si viene giù così solo se si dà uno strappo alla cloche.	/out of focus blur. Camera gradually rack focusses on very grey floor with plane wreckage. Slow reverse zoom to ls hangar, slow pull back continues Enormous hangar slowly revealed, very blue, black & white. Tiny figures on far wall at top of frame, wreckage centre, pull back to include speakers, plus photographer, backview in foreground.

Reverse zoom continues to els



- 0.42 vo Journalist: Però c'è chi dice che l'aereo è esploso in aria. Se l'aereo fosse caduto a terra le ali avrebbero dovuto tagliare dei pioppi...  
toccarli, stroncare dei rami... e invece niente..
- 0.53 non un albero che rechi una traccia..
- mentre i resti dell'aereo... furono raccolti in un raggio di 400 metri; segno che l'aereo è esploso in aria
- 1.03 General: (hard tone) L'aereo non è esploso in aria. Questo è un punto indiscutibile  
Journalist: Come mai la Commissione non ha fatto eseguire nessuna perizia balistica?  
General: E su che cosa? Dall'esame di ogni singolo frammento dei resti delle vittime non è emerso alcun reperto che documenti lesioni attribuibili a focolai di esplosione.
- 1.26 Journalist: E come mai nessun albero è stato toccato.. tagliato nella caduta dell'aereo?
- General: Semplicemente perchè l'aereo è caduto in spirale. E così è entrato di coltello fra un filare e l'altro degli alberi.
- 1.40 Journalist: C'è anche un'altra ipotesi. Si parla di una piccolissima quantità di esplosivo,  
A (vo) 50 grammi di plastico, inseriti nell'ogiva di coda
- 1.44 Il pilota, accendendo il fanalino, avrebbe provocato un'esplosione sufficiente a recidere i cavi  
B
- 1.47 Il pilota, accendendo il fanalino, avrebbe provocato un'esplosione sufficiente a recidere i cavi  
A
- /bw photo of wreckage on ground,  
another photo of trees & wreckage put on top
- another photo of ground & wreckage  
/la ms journalist holding large photo, low ceiling, oil portrait lh side rather tilted  
picks up another photo, holds it up.
- Aerial pic of patch-work of field systems  
/hs General on sofa with ornate carved wood back, looks up r
- Pull back swiftly to include journalist backview rh, table in between
- pull in to ms both
- General leans forward to be included in frame.
- /ls deep focus from behind table, General & Journalist backview in foreground l & r, photographer els takes photos;
- Gen picks up photo, gestures spin
- /la ms journalist, v ornate portrait & mirrors tilted in background
- /ms General against green velvet sofa, light net curtains behind  
/la ms journalist as A

- di comando. E così l'aereo sarebbe caduto in spirale come sostiene lei.
- 1.57 General: E impossibile. /ms General as B  
B Secondo questa ipotesi il sabotaggio avrebbe dovuto funzionare prima... Poco dopo aver iniziato il volo.. all'imbrunire .. quando vengono accese le luci.
- 2.07 Journalist: E la contraddizione del contadino? /pa journalist rh side. Table with sprigged cover, objets d'art & lamp at lh  
Perchè la prima versione è che vide l'aereo esplodere in aria.
- 2.11 General: No. Non è /la pa General, backview  
esatto. Il contadino ha standing, pours drink; turns  
dichiarato di aver visto to 3/4 view almost addressing  
cadere dal cielo delle camera directly  
fiammelle. Il che non walks towards camera  
esclude che l'aereo sia to ms  
esploso in terra e che le  
fiammelle non fossero walks forward  
altro che la ricaduta dei to hs  
frammenti incendiati. hands drink to journalist
- 2.23 Journalist: Però alla /ms General backview lh side,  
Commissione d'inchiesta journalist facing him rh  
il contadino ha dato una side, journalist forward to  
versione diversa da take drink; General goes off-  
quella della notte frame, journalist looks r  
dell'incidente. E anche a  
me che sono stato a pan down as sits, hs 3/4 view  
intervistarlo 10 giorni looks up l
- 2.33 fa.

This sequence and subsequence are structured in the form of the journalistic enquiry. Two conflicting versions of the cause of the fatal crash are rehearsed. Camera movement within the long takes punctuates the dialogue and gives emphasis to new points. Once again, photographs are used to cue the authenticity of the evidence demonstrated; the framing invites us the spectator to scan the evidence. The text uses the codes of actuality reporting and photoreportage to suggest an unproblematic, denotative link with a real event and, at the same time, doubts as to the veracity of the "official"

meaning. The out-of-focus transition to the insert at the time the photographs were taken is not only a way of varying the visual information. It provides an anaphoric reference to the penultimate sequence where the investigation of the wreckage starts, and repeats an extra layer of connotations of truth. In addition, the cold colour tones of the hangar sequences provide a visual rhyme with the photographic evidence. The use of the zoom and reverse zoom emphasizes the depth of the composition in frame in the long takes. The photographers have a metadiegetic function, indicating levels of the embedding of the narrative.

Long takes and depth of field shots form part of the grammar of the war film, Uomini contro. The influence of genre conventions can be seen in the predominance of rapid editing patterns, especially in the battle scenes when impressions of movement direction and chaos are generated. The following sequence occurs early in the film. The previous sequence introduces the protagonist, Lt Sassu, and Capt Abbati's opinion of General Leone. Here, as the transcription shows, the deictic markers of person in the dialogue find their counterpart in the framings of the figures. Leone's words refer to third persons; Ottolenghi's consistently to interpersonal relationships reflected in the use of 'we'. The use of binoculars marks General Leone as seeking to control another, co-temporal spatial context, whilst interpreting events in his own space in an arbitrary fashion.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
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0.00		/els, horizontal stony road 2/3 up frame on hill; greeny- grey tree trunks on both
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	gunshots machine gun fire <u>vo</u> : Alt!	sides; ground covered with russet leaves. Black-green figures with helmets & cloaks on road. Camera pans r to follow, pan r and down as some leave road & walk towards camera soldiers passing camera spin & fall reframe ms to cu bodies at foot of trees
0.31	<u>Scout</u> : Alt!	/ha ls patrol in green open ground at edge of wood. Lea- der yells & throws self down
0.33	<u>General Leone</u> : Tenente!	/ms Leone amongst troops, stern face; pattern of cloaks & helmets in grey, lks r
0.36	<u>Lt Ottolenghi</u> : Comandi!	/hs Ottolenghi looking l, checks, turns r
0.38	<u>Gen Leone</u> : Chi ha data l'alt?	/ms Leone, hands on hips; Ottolenghi rh 3/4 salutes
0.42	<u>Lt Ottolenghi</u> : Credo un nostro esploratore, signor Generale.	/ms Ottolenghi rs 3/4 facing Leone, trees & troops, wounded, behind
0.44	<u>Gen Leone</u> : Lo faccia fucilare. <u>vo Ottolenghi</u> : Signorsì.	/hs Leone stares impassively Leone turns to look l, raises binoculars to eyes in profile
0.52	<u>Gen Leone</u> : Eccola lí la linea italiana: 2 chilo- metri allo scoperto. Li faremo di corsa.	/Light, unfocussed central area, moves r to include roc- ky hillside & Italian sol- diers tied to stakes
1.00		/pa Leone among sea of helmets
1.02		/Ottolenghi approaches to ms, salutes
1.05	<u>Gen Leone</u> : Allora, lo ha fatto fucilare?	/cu Leone
1.08	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : Signornò. Mi confermano che è stato un esploratore a dare l'alt. Si è trovato allo scoperto. Sopra ci sono le mitragliatrici austriache che battono il terreno...	/hs Ottolenghi
1.16	<u>Gen Leone</u> : (coldly) Lo faccia fucilare egualmente.	/cu Leone
1.18	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : Signor Generale, io non posso far fucilare un uomo che non ha commesso un reato.	/hs Ottolenghi
1.23	<u>Gen Leone</u> : (shouts) Lo faccia passare per le armi! Immediatamente!	/ecu Leone

	(rumble)	
1.30	<u>vo Ottolenghi</u> : Signorsí.	/ls green, scout up l through trees to ms, looks l to Ottolenghi. Fresh & innocent face
	<u>Scout</u> : Signor Tenente, ho dato io l'alt.	
1.38	(vo) E adesso che facciamo? Andiamo avanti o ci fermiamo?	/ms Ottolenghi, brown leaves background, trees & troops; to camera hs looks r
1.43		/ms scout, looks worried
1.45	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : Vieni qua, vieni qua. Giù.	/ms Ottolenghi, hesitates, looks up, pan as moves r, sits on leaves, leans back. Scout joins him. Finds cigarettes
2.03	<u>vo Ottolenghi</u> : Toh, fuma.	/cu scout, Ottolenghi's POV
2.06	Quanti anni hai?	/cu Ottolenghi with cigarette
2.11	<u>Scout</u> : Ventuno.	/cu scout
2.12	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : Che mestiere fai?	/cu Ottolenghi with cigarette, looks r
	<u>vo scout</u> : Il contadino, sior Tenente	
2.19		/cu scout looks l, trusting face, Ottolenghi's shoulder in frame
2.25	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : Tu, che ne dici?	/cu Ottolenghi, looks up r & then l, looks r pensively, picks tobacco from lip, smiles
2.39	<u>Scout</u> : Di che cosa, signor Tenente?	/cu scout
2.43	bang	/hs Ottolenghi looks down, then l
2.47	<u>vo Ottolenghi</u> : Fermi!	/leaves, pan l to show troops & stretcher, unfocussed at first
2.48	Aspettate con quel morto! Fermi! Voi!	/ecu Ottolenghi, yells, off l
2.53	Sparate in aria!	/pa Ottolenghi, runs up hill & back down, looks r
2.58	<u>vo Ottolenghi</u> : Sparate in aria!	/ls diagonal hillside slopes top l to bottom r, troops crouch among trees, rifles in air, fire
3.01	gunshots	/la ls stretcher, pan l as move uphill
3.13	<u>vo O</u> : Andiamo su	/unfocussed grey; pa Ottolenghi into focus; slow reverse zoom as he comes uphill to pa on road where Leone stands; Very grey & green
3.26	<u>Ottolenghi</u> : L'ordine è stato eseguito	/la ms group; Ottolenghi salutes & moves l so Leone sees body
	<u>Gen Leone</u> : (slowly) In guerra la disciplina è un	Leone salutes, Ottolenghi salutes & looks



	esigenza dolorosa ma necessaria. Onoriamo i nostri morti.	sardonic
3.37		/la group from middle of stretcher; pan l to show column watching the group as stretcher is taken off
3.49		/ha ls column curving in an arc l along road, heads down. Column moves off front l.
4.03		Fade.

Here it is the framings which cue the relationships which are important to the narrative. The large numbers of close-ups permit the reading of expressions on the faces of Ottolenghi and the scout, and for these to be contrasted to that of General Leone. The initial long take establishes truth of décor and is an economical exposition of the incident which motivates the subsequent confrontation between Ottolenghi and the General, and which has the catalyzer function of fleshing out their ideological positions. The performances act as indices proper of different social positions which are framed to be deciphered by the spectator. Gaze direction and gesture cue the relative positions of the characters to one another in a general way. The landscape and the costumes provide authenticating detail and have an informant function to cue time (First World War) and place (the stony mountains of the Carso). Authenticating detail and performance cues allow the reading of an opposition between Leone and Ottolenghi. It is interesting to note that, although this is a brief, messy incident in war, the shots are beautifully composed and framed to show the landscapes and troops in the backgrounds. Colours are muted and sombre, yet are differentiated and have depth. Faces and backgrounds are clearly delineated.

In other cases, depth of field is used to cue unambiguously



the relative importance of objects, or people, in relationship to each other. In Cadaveri eccellenti, for example, gaze direction, framing and sound cue the telephone and radio to become figure from the ground of objects in Rogas' flat, in a mental-process montage illustrating Rogas' realization that his telephone is tapped. After the dream sequences in Tre fratelli a crane shot situates the three brothers in deep focus in relation to each other. Rocco sobs as he looks out of the window which frames Raffaele seated on a bench in the courtyard below and Nicola pressed weeping against the far wall. The lack of communication between them is illustrated visually and, whilst they are placed in a realistic, contiguous space, the camera movement also signals the artificiality and technical difficulty of the shot.

The use of deep focus and camera movement in Cronaca di una morte annunciata underlines the importance of the plaza as focal point of the village, emphasizes the collective nature of village life, and the relationships between characters. Cristo Bedoya's address to camera is conative. His words refer to a past tense, but framings show no difference in décor between that which is marked as 'now' and the context of 'then' which is delineated by off-screen glances, thus stressing the immobilism of his cultural context.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<u>Cristo Bedoya</u> : Alquien que nunca fue identificado habia metido por debajo de la puerta un papel dentro de un sobre en el cual le avisaba a Santiago Nasar que los hermanos Vicario lo estaban esperando para ma-	/els plaza, huge Nasar house in background, Bedoya is slightly l of centre, he addresses the camera directly villagers cross square around him, women with baskets, soldiers, mules etc Bedoya walks slowly forward

	tarlo. Le revelaba el lugar, los motivos y otros detalles muy precisos del intriga. Pero Santiago no lo vió; ni lo vió Divina Flor; ni lo vió nadie hasta mucho tiempo después.	slight reframe as Bedoya walks forward to stop ms occupying lh side of frame, Nasar house at rh
0.27	Music ebbs & flows in entire sequence	/ms Santiago Nasar against door & wall of house, walks towards camera but is kept in ms, figures carrying flags walk in front of him
0.35		/cu table on which are knives wrapped in paper, hand grabs another knife
0.37	<u>Clotilde Armenta</u> : Por el amor de Dios	/pa table, Vicario twins either side, Clotilde Armenta centre against pillar, her hand reaches to knife
0.41	(vo) dejen esa venganza para después	/hs twin A, cut on forehead, he looks up & l, to an old man at table behind & black man at door
0.44	(vo) aunque sea por respeto	/hs twin B looking r; open door behind him
0.46	al Señor Obispo	/hs Armenta, plaza behind her; she looks down then r
0.48		/ms Nasar walking through crowds
0.51		/hs Armenta looks l and r
0.52		/hs twin A, throws drink back, bystanders watch behind him; twin A watches Armenta cross to r behind him & go off-frame, he pours a drink
	Sounds of café & street	/hs twin B looks r at Armenta, then looks off frame r
0.59		/hs Nasar; yellow flag obscures him; he walks forward to cu
1.03		/els; twins ms backview in foreground looking out into plaza; Nasar house can be seen in far background, cart & Nasar centre
1.08		The young Bedoya comes into frame from lh; the 2 shake hands
1.16		/hs twin A drinks, looks at something out of frame
1.20		/els plaza, Nasar & young Bedoya off r
1.25		/hs twin B looks at twin A
1.28		then looks off frame



The structure of these two sequences is typical of Cronaca di una morte annunciata which uses a great many long shots and compositions in depth to situate the viewer in relation to the plaza, and to establish the complicity of the inhabitants of the entire town in relation to the murder. There are frequent glances to off-screen space and movements in and out of frame, which cue hypotheses of 'real' action around the camera.

Kristin Thompson has suggested that "the illusion of chance", which Bazin identified, is necessary for the generation of the impression of the randomness of reality in neorealist films.<sup>36</sup>

Cronaca di una morte annunciata similarly fails to provide other motivation for incidental or coincidental events - such as the avoidance of the confrontation, or failure to deliver messages. In the absence of strong cues to causal motivation or a range of societal connotations, chance plays a strong role in narrative development.

The use of camera movement and depth of field reach a sort of apotheosis in Carmen, where the cues to the construction of a 'real', or hyper real, Spain sit uneasily alongside characters singing in French. The transcription reveals that whereas the dialogue markers refer to the existence of the absent Don José and opposes the soldiers to Micaëla, the framings and camera movements suggest a much wider opposition of soldiers to their context. The following example indicates the complexity of the mise en scène:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<u>Morales</u> : Que cherchez vous la belle?	/hs Micaëla rh, crosses frame to far lh, bkview, looks to Morales silhouetted on steps on wall in distance
0.04	<u>Micaëla</u> : Moi, je cherche	/ls Micaëla looking r



- un brigadier
- 0.09 Morales: Je suis là.. /ls Morales, looks l, salutes  
voilà
- 0.12 Micaëla: Mon brigadier à /ms Micaëla, looks 3/4 r,  
moi s'appelle Don José. moves to r  
Le connaissez vous?
- 0.20 Morales: Don José! Nous /ls Morales. he  
le connaissons tous. descends stairs, walks  
vo Micaëla: Vraiment! forward, looking l,  
Est-il avec vous, je vous to ms  
prie?  
Morales: Il n'est pas  
brigadier dans notre  
compagnie
- 0.33 vo Micaëla: Alors, il /ls 4 soldiers in blue  
n'est pas là?... sitting on walls, lh soldier  
vo Morales: Non, ma looks l & gesticulates; pan  
charmante, il n'est pas down & l as they get up &  
là; mais toute à l'heure move to ms bkview, Micaëla &  
il y sera, quand la garde Morales are framed centre  
montante remplacera la beyond them  
garde descendante.  
Morales + chorus: Il y  
sera quand la garde  
montante remplacera la  
garde descendante.  
Slow zoom to follow guards  
down to surround Micaëla
- 1.02 vo Morales: Mais en /la ms crane on nest  
attendant
- 1.06 qu'il vienne, voulez- /eha els from crane's nest.  
vous, la belle enfant, Edge of ramparts divides  
frame diagonally; on the lh  
side a tiny Micaëla confronts  
4 soldiers, Morales on her  
other side; on the rh is the  
plaza, planes of rooves of  
the town
- 1.12 voulez-vous prendre la /ms Morales in profile, looks  
peine r, pan down and r  
d'entrer chez nous un pan r  
instant? to profile hs Micaëla against  
yellow bricks, she looks l
- Micaëla: Chez vous?  
Morales: Chez nous!  
Micaëla: Non pas, non  
pas, grand merci,  
messieurs les soldats.
- 1.30 A Morales: Entrez sans /nearer ls, slight pan r and  
crainte, mignonne. Je reframe as soldiers walk r  
vous promets qu'on aura and encircle Micaëla  
pour votre chère  
personne, tous les égards  
qu'il faudra.
- 1.55 Micaëla: Je n'en doute /hs Micaëla looks round at  
pas, cependant je revien- soldiers  
drai, c'est plus prudent.  
Je reviendrai quand la  
garde montante

- 2.04 vo Micaëla: remplacera la garde descendante /hs Morales in profile looking r
- 2.09 Micaëla: Non pas, non pas! /ls as A, Micaëla tries to break circle  
Morales + chorus: Vous resterez.  
Micaëla: Non pas, non pas, non, non!  
Morales + chorus: Oui, vous resterez, vous resterez!
- 2.22 Micaëla: Au revoir, messieurs les soldats! /ha ls soldiers bkview, Micaëla breaks out of their circle & runs off-frame r  
Morales: L'oiseau s'envole.. On s'en console. Reprenons notre passe-temps et regardons passer les gens. Camera cranes up & l as Morales walks to railing & looks down on Micaëla running on road below, Micaëla goes off-frame lh.
- Chorus: Sur la place, chacun passe, chacun vient, chacun va; Drôles de gens que ces gens-là! camera stays on ls tall building in bkground, soldiers at windows
- 3.15

Here the long take functions not just to explicate the singing and to vary the mise en scène. Character glance in on-screen and at off-screen space cues the construction once again of a realistic space; the light intensity, white walls, architecture etc signal this as Spain. Besides the isotopie "South", which forms a semantic chain throughout the work, camera angle and framing also set up the themes of power and control, restraint and release. Women in the opening sequence have been decorative bystanders at the bullfight, passive observers of male games. We have seen the townswomen and gypsies coralled into the tobacco factory; here we see illustrated the danger that male force represents for Micaëla. It constrains her physically and she has to burst away from it in flight. The camera angles, framing and depth of field also emphasize the power of the military and their position of surveillance, exphasized by the extraordinary extreme long

shot from the crane's nest over the town. As in the medieval epic, where story details are repeated, elements of one shot are repeated in the next, thus dragging the narrative forward, and accentuating the impression of reality. Access to the ideological reality of this recreated nineteenth century Spain is attained through the ostension of socio-cultural effects, rather than solely through the metonymic chain.

In conclusion, camera movement and depth of field are used as powerful cues to realism. However, Rosi's style by no means depends on the long take to convey realism. Typically the long take is but one stylistic device which is orchestrated within the sequence to enhance the reality effect and emphasize information and connections.

#### Off-screen space

We have seen in the previous section that the long take within depth of field, although a considerable part of Rosi's stylistic repertoire, does not dominate over other aspects of mise en scène and editing. The long take cannot be said to become the plan séquence where the device structures the entire sequence. Indeed, in the later films, long takes are used to cue a heightened realism which corresponds to a more extravagant, emotional presence in the diegetic world. In the earlier films, these devices were allied to cues to the construction of a socially significant space, and it was the actions which took place within this social space which generated the emotions.

The previous examples have, however, indicated the importance of off-screen space in generating cues to realism. Noël Burch has pointed out that "any film ... suggests an opposition



between screen space and off-screen space through the use of such devices as off-screen glances, the shot and the reverse shot, partially out-of-frame actors ..."<sup>37</sup>, but that few films incorporate the opposition explicitly into the structure of the whole film.

In the films under discussion, off-screen space is suggested in several ways. One way, which we will explore shortly, derives from the diagonal composition, often allied to movement into and out of frame. Characters can also exit and enter scenographic space indicating the existence of other planes around the camera which may or may not be revealed. We have also seen how character gaze direction is also important in the investigative format. By far the most significant way, as Burch suggests<sup>38</sup>, is to use sound to bring off-screen space into play.

Ambient sound - whether street noise, or other diegetically motivated noises - is orchestrated in a complex manner in all these films to indicate sound-sources in all six "segments" of off-screen space. Even the aerial atmosphere can be indicated by the presence of the calls of jackdaws.

The iconicity of sound is an important factor in the evocation of realistic space. It is also a factor in the indication of temporality, often being used as index of real time. It is necessary in anchoring the image in time as well as space. As David Bordwell has pointed out, image and sound can diverge with respect to narrative order.<sup>39</sup> The effect, for example in Cadaveri eccellenti, is as of a mental process sequence.

In this section we have seen how Rosi uses technical conventions of neorealism such as indications of off-screen

space, compositions in depth and the long take, real decors rather than studio shots, the accumulation of realistic detail and, in the previous section, the reportage style. We have also seen that his framings are highly organized so that information is communicated or connoted at several levels. Mise en scène and camera movement work together at a symbolic level to cue preferred readings of the texts.

### Anchorage

Whilst using the codes and conventions of realist cinema Rosi's films also rely on the stressed denotation of historically or geographically authentic places, action, reconstructions. In this section we will examine the interplay of metonymy, deictic and anaphoric references.

### Metonymy

James Monaco has claimed that metonymy and metaphor are the main ways in which film conveys connotative meaning. He has shown how metonymy works to invoke an abstract idea through associated details.<sup>40</sup> McMahon and Quin<sup>41</sup> see metonymy as the stock in trade of the news programme in that short verbal outlines or film extracts are selected and represented to the viewer as the whole event, and that:-

"The metonym works because the spectator is given a little information and has to make an effort to construct the rest for her/himself. By actively enticing the spectator into the communication process, the viewer is encouraged to believe that she/he is responsible for the perceived meaning. Thus metonymy is a very persuasive form of communication."

Fiske suggests that metonyms work as "powerful conveyors of reality because they work indexically. They are part of that for which they stand."<sup>42</sup> He suggests that it is the apparent

arbitrariness of the selection of metonymic detail which gives it the appearance of "a natural index" with the status of being unquestionably real. Elam proposes additional elements of theatrical performance as metonymic - the actors' accessories (costumes, props), elements of the decor, elements of performance such as gesture and expression<sup>43</sup>. We will see that there is a tension between the strongly indexical nature of these contextual and performance elements. To these we can, of course, add sound which, as we have seen, is a powerful tool in the evocation of additional elements of reality. The practice of shooting in real locations has been a constant feature of Italian cinema from the silent period when an abundance of natural sunlight and the survival of picturesque ruins privileged the development of particular types of cinema. Exterior shooting, a practical necessity during the early neorealist period, became a hallmark of the realist style. Real locations are carefully selected for their graphic and associative qualities, facilitating metaphorical and symbolic allusion. Elements of the mise en scène are also chosen for their power to suggest in a kind of shorthand another layer of reality. In Rosi's films they share the qualities of Zavattini's "film-lampo", rapidly shot film which suggests by its very immediacy and choice of details "il senso della nostra "solita" vita."<sup>44</sup> In the sequence of the collapse of the building in the Vicolo Sant'Andrea in Le mani sulla città, for example, metonymic connections firmly anchor the film ideologically:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
00.00	Booming noise	/ha els wide road, railway



	street noises	lh, jumbled tall buildings rh, swift zoom to base of side of one building to man with pick
0.05	thud	/ha ls base of building, man with pick next to pile driver
0.11	thud	/ha ls pile driver, workmen throw water on it. Pan r & up scaffolding
0.35	street noises, rhythmic thuds	/ha alley, chains around load of bricks hoisted in lh fore- ground, washing on lines, slight zoom to figures, girl runs up, postman looks up, reverse zoom as basket lowered to him, pan down to woman cooking in street, workmen go up to her, block of stone falls by workmen, dust rises
	loud thud	
1.12		/la ms workmen look up l, zoom to mother & baby rh
1.15	rumble	/la looking up at wall & balcony, women look up
1.17	rumble	/la high buildings, rh wall begins to bulge outwards
A		
1.20	<u>Girl</u> : Mamma mia! rumble	/hs girl in shadow, looks up, screen goes dark
1.24	Roar, screams	/la ls A, wall falls outwards
1.28		/ha ls fast zoom into workman below
1.29		/la masonry falling
1.30		/els side of building from wide road, falling masonry slips down the side of the building, dust rises
1.34		/Dark, street level, hs figures, pan r to follow them to ls of alley
B		
1.37		/la ls masonry falls (C)
1.40	roar	/ls B, figures run
1.42	screams	/ls C masonry falls
1.47	roar roar	/la ls & pan down disinte- grating building
1.50		/els wide road, side of buil- ding falls, men run to camera
D	roar, shouts	/cu dust, timber, masonry, pan down
1.54		/els D, dust settling
2.00		/la ls building, dust
2.04	screams	/ha els, pan down & r as men run for help
2.08	hoots shouts	/ls men stop cars, pan r
2.13	shouts	/ls worker gesticulates, pan r over traffic jam, car off r
2.15	hoots, shouts shouts	

2.22	hoots	/ls base of collapsed building, men run to timbers
E	shouts	/ha ls, zoom down building & pan r to rubble at base
2.25		/ls E, rescuers arrive
F	shouts	/ha ls F, people rush around pointing off-screen
2.39		/els D, people rush to rubble
2.41	shouts, cries	/ls rubble & crowds helping
2.45	ditto	/la road, police restrain crowds
2.51	sirens	/ha els rubble from alley entrance, zoom & pan down l as van arrives
2.57		/pa road, trucks, firemen cross with stretchers
3.01	sirens	/ha ls buildings flanking road, pan r to rubble following fire engine
	sirens, shouts	/ls road, traffic policeman stops white mercedes; car moves towards camera; reframe as Nottola gets out; zoom to hs Nottola, he looks up; pan l as Nottola goes into an alley; he is framed in ls
3.07		/ls alley, Nottola appears in centre of a narrow opening in background; pan r, Nottola looks up & enters building site r, where he is silhouetted els framed against square opening; he moves off; boys cross light square & go off l
3.10	sirens, shouts	/la ls side of building; firemen appear at top of diagonal ladder carrying unconscious boy down
3.34		/cu rubble foreground, crowd restrained by police in ls; firemen work to remove rocks
	music (crashing chords, electric guitar)	
4.09		
G	music	
4.29	crashing chords, music	
4.40	<u>Woman</u> : Oh, figlio mio!	
4.53	music	

This sequence illustrates the effectiveness of metonymy as a rhetorical device to evoke a social reality economically. The shots of the road and the alleys suggest two types of urban development, the crowded, haphazard centro storico and the wide, modern roads which have superceded it. In the alley working class types suggest larger numbers of that class; the food stall suggests a wider cultural reality of cramped rooms,

life on the street, community etc. The rumbles and roars of collapsing masonry, the screams, shouts and sirens, the fleeting shots of the buildings and figures rushing, all evoke the complete picture of the disaster in human and institutional terms. The white mercedes of Nottola is a metonym for his social reality - power, money, large house in fresh air, and so on. His performance and gesture also indicate him as different from the working class. He is detached, an observer, and summing up this series of metonymic cues is the metaphoric suggestion of a certain moral detachment. Nottola has no morals. The woman's cry for her son is another aural metonym, standing in for another, only too imaginable tragedy and underlined by the music track. Juxtaposed as Nottola is to the tragedy, two contrasting ideological positions are suggested; that of rampant individualism and self-interest concealing wider class interests, and that of a class without power which is at the mercy of events beyond their control and the attentions of the agents of those in power.

Ostension of metonymic elements is also achieved by camera movements - pans, tracks, zooms - and by framings. These, as we have shown, are the salient techniques of the neorealist film in the interests of conveying objective verisimilitude. The depiction of interiors in the films also shows the tension between the metonymic and the metaphoric, the realist style, and another which draws on the conventions of the art film or the iconography of the American thriller, which pervades Rosi's films.

In the majority of cases interiors are framed and presented



for maximum communicativeness. Peasant interiors are generally shown in long shot in order to show in one encapsulating glance the lack of decoration or accumulated possessions; peasant dwellings in Salvatore Giuliano, Cristo si è fermato a Eboli or Tre fratelli, for example show the context of peasant life and the poverty of their material conditions of existence. Bourgeois dwellings, the settings of the powerful can be evoked by significant detail - ornate chairs, large and showy lamps (which proliferate in all the films), objets d'art, books. Where this detail is lacking, interiors are often framed for a metaphoric reading. The Committee of Enquiry into the Vicolo Sant'Andrea disaster in Le mani sulla città is shot in high contrast lighting, light from the far window emphasizing the large areas of darkness and obscurity which the Committee has to address; the confrontation in the peasant farmhouse towards the end of La sfida takes place in dark, cramped, oppressive rooms. Offscreen sound suggests the presence of a frightened woman and a crying child, who are then verbally threatened by Aiello's men. The spectator thus makes hypotheses about the nature of the camorra, how it operates and maintains its power.

Evocation of rural Italy is undoubtedly one of the pleasures generated by the later films. Here, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, the drive towards truth in depiction of the reality of the Mezzogiorno has become contaminated by the association from the seventies onwards of life in the countryside as somehow more authentic and real. Public scandals and radical politics have emphasized corruption in the institutions

associated with the city in Italy. Changes in cultural values, the break-up of the relationships of the extended family, and women's demands for power-sharing, have been reflected in dissatisfaction with the conditions of urban existence. Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Tre fratelli are concerned to validate practices and beliefs in rural society, which is evoked metonymically in images which owe as much to the iconography of advertising, tourism and the heritage industry, as to the inheritance of neorealism.

The use of non-professional actors is another device common in Italian cinema to indicate particular social milieux. Rosi has documented the work on Visconti's La terra trema with the inhabitants of Aci Trezza as actors and Visconti's punctilious attention to authenticity.<sup>45</sup> Discussion of the early Soviet filmmakers and the writing of Lukács in the 1950s gave a political justification and theoretical framework to this practice.<sup>46</sup> From film to film the use of non-professionals is evident. They are used to suggest types in the Lukácsian sense, binding characters to a context, as do the many actors from the Southern, dialect theatres who are used to embodying various stereotypes in their performance.

Rosi's films are typified by the use of a great number of extras, who represent metonymically the social context of the film - Vito's neighbours and the peasants in La sfida, the anonymous crowds of Northern European faces in I magliari, peasants in Salvatore Giuliano, C'era una volta, Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Tre fratelli; southern peasants in uniform in Uomini contro; the portly, middle-aged, criminal fraternities of Lucky Luciano, Dimenticare Palermo and the

first two films; and social babble and modes of leisure of the middle and upper classes mobilized in Il caso Mattei, Il momento della verità and Cadaveri eccellenti. The townspeople of Cronaca have a choral function suggesting the collective weight of their traditions, whilst differentiating them enough to indicate the multi-racial nature of the society. They function in Ricoeur's sense of documents<sup>47</sup> or traces of a past time and, by the duplication of figures at different ages, they emphasize the succession of generations and the temporal realism of the text.

Where the principle actors have impersonated historical figures, the secondary text has insisted upon the professionalism of the actor in observing and recreating the appearance and mannerisms of that figure. The tendency has been not to delineate them as complex figures psychologically but to portray them as acting authentically in their institutional or social context. The danger in the early films is that a certain fascination with the character of a historical personage makes it difficult for the film to maintain a critical stance vis à vis its subject; and in the later films, made with large budgets for a mass, international audience, the syuzhet indications of the psychological motivation of the protagonists are insufficient to explain the events. The contextual overcoding is an attempt to compensate for the paucity of psychological realism. Interestingly, it is this contextual overcoding and insistence on typicity that allows the intrusion of tensions in the films around masculinity. This will be discussed in the next Chapter.



### Deixis

In this section we will consider how realist cinema is able to make connections between the intra and extra-diegetic worlds in the interests of establishing the authority of the film text.

Bordwell claims that "film narration does not possess features akin to deixis, those linguistic signals of the context of utterance".<sup>48</sup> In his study of distance and deixis in poetic address, Culler suggests that reader expectations about the nature of lyric poetry alters the effects of deictics, referring the reader not to an external context, but forcing the construction of a fictional situation of utterance.<sup>49</sup>

Elam, however, argues that in theatrical performance the "indicative character of the kinesic or parakinesic signal may legitimately be defined as deictic"<sup>50</sup> and that gestural as well as verbal deixis is crucial to the production of theatrical discourse.

We would argue that deictic markers are essential to narrative cinema, in creating verisimilitude in the 'classic realist text',<sup>51</sup> and in signalling the authenticity of political realism.

It is a characteristic of mainstream cinema to establish rapidly in the opening sequences a plausible space and time, and the illusion of plausible, anchored characters. What screenwriters call "backstory", a corpus of imagined life events and character traits, may be called into the diegetic world by means of verbal allusions. These exophoric references combine with endophoric references to other syuzhet events, and anaphoric references to things or events earlier

in the diegesis, to create the illusion of a coherent, realistically motivated, diegetic world.

The films under discussion also use language-gesture interaction as indexical markers to anchor and authenticate the films' discourse. The following transcription from Lucky Luciano illustrates the interaction of deictic, intentional and attitudinal markers.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<u>vo Man 1</u> : Hey, Siragusa, look here comes Albert Anastasia, huh, wanted by the Justice Department. <u>Siragusa</u> : Yeah! Responsible for at least 50 executions but there's no evidence.	/interior of a surveillance van, hs cameraman lh by van window looking at grey figures beyond reverse zoom to include Siragusa rh by window, man 1 in foreground lh Man 1 swigs coke
0.08	<u>vo Man 2</u> : I'm running outta film! Who is this guy? <u>vo 1</u> : Meyer Lansky. <u>vo 2</u> : You kidding! The brain! What's a yid like that doing with all those guineas, Siragusa? <u>vo Siragusa</u> : I'm a guinea myself and I'll break your ass! (giggles off) How do you like this guy! Lo stronzo. <u>vo 1</u> : None of this stuff! What's a stronzo? <u>vo 2</u> : It's a turd (laughter)	/exterior cu front of car, pan l as man gets out in ms pan r to keep him in ms as he walks in front of car & r to boat, others follow with large basket of yellow & white flowers which cross cu in foreground
0.36	<u>vo 1</u> : All right, load it up. Let's get some footage of these guys, huh. laughter. <u>vo</u> : stronzo!	/ls black car, fat man in black coat & white scarf gets out & walks towards camera to ms
0.52	<u>vo 1</u> : Here comes Frank Costello, the Prime Minister, with Socks Lanza. <u>vo 2</u> : Boss of the Fulton fish market? Christ! What a party, eh Charlie!	/pa fat man, camera tracks back & r to follow party, bales & sacks in foreground
1.06	<u>Siragusa</u> : Wouldn't it be beautiful if we could pinch those bastards right now. Here we are	/cu Siragusa in profile, looks l

- 1.14      freezing our balls off  
and they're out there  
having a good time.      /pa backviews of group of  
hoods walking to gangplank  
followed by dockers
- 1.23      /la ls flower-filled state-  
room. Man 3 turns with arms  
wide, raises glass
- 1.28      Man 3: Eviva! Alla salute  
di Charlie!      /ls from end of rh table,  
others gesticulate, partly  
obscure camera in foreground
- 1.29      Man 4: Champagne! Venite  
ca, ca      /cu Lucky Luciano, he looks  
round, laughs
- 1.29      Lucky Luciano: No! No, mi  
fa male il bere. Avanti,  
vi prego.
- 1.33      Man 1: They're gonna be  
drinking champagne and  
you're pissing in a coke  
bottle! (water noise)      /pa 3-shot interior truck,  
zoom into window, grey  
figures in background  
outside.
- 1.37      Siragusa: Son of a bitch!      /pa 3-shot, Siragusa ms in  
foreground.
- 1.39      Man 5: You don't run the  
country without power.  
When you are a boss, the  
first thing you gotta  
establish is that you're  
the person who puts  
things in order, and he  
who puts things in order  
is a man of power.  
/interior la ls stateroom  
filled with flowers; Man 5,  
Luciano & Lansky in lh half  
of frame.  
coffered ceiling & bulkhead  
lights visible
- 1.59      Lansky: An' after you es-  
tablish order, you esta-  
blish peace!

Here deictic markers indicate who is being addressed; demonstratives situate the énoncé with respect to the interlocutors; and adverbials indicate place and time. Deictic markers of space refer to a reality elsewhere where those under observation are the subject of criminal investigations, and repeatedly to a reality within the van. The sequences illustrate the paradox that the agents of the DEA are confined, poor, have a limited viewpoint, whilst gestural and verbal deictics of the mafia refer to large numbers, to wealth and community. Interestingly, the dialogue of the three DEA men is rich in verbal signals which have a phatic function,



serving to maintain social relationships between the speakers. Parallel editing and deictic markers offer contrasts and similarities between the two groups.

The complex play of orientational markers can also be seen in the later films which also seek to engage with the reality of contemporary Italy. The following short extract from Tre fratelli illustrates the difference from earlier strategies, to which Rosi alluded in the interview material quoted earlier in this Chapter.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
0.00	<p><u>Raffaele</u>: Come tu sei mi hanno passato il tuo processo.  Non so ancora se accetterò.  Mi sono preso qualche giorno, ci voglio pensare. Ti voglio chiedere se ti hanno fatto minacce precise, o pure se al contrario tu hai delle altre ragioni personali per abbandonare tutto.</p>	<p>/Interior car, Raffaele in profile, looks r, streets &amp; pedestrians of Rome visible in background.  glances r to interlocutor  turns to face other, then back to profile</p>
0.23	<p><u>Judge</u>: Io ero anche pronto a rischiare la vita    se fossi stato convinto che possa servire a cambiare le cose.  Sono mesi che non dormo, ma non c'è niente da fare.  E una condanna a morte,</p>	<p>turns to look at other</p> <p>/cu man in suit, briefcase held on lap, in profile, looking l  glances at Raffaele  turns back to profile</p>
0.36	<p>(vo) solo la data dell'esecuzione pure non te lo dicono.</p>	<p>turns to Raffaele  /hs Raffaele in profile</p>
0.41	<p>Tutte le volte che uscivo di casa mia moglie mi guardava fisso come se fosse per l'ultima volta. Di notte mi svegliavo per andare guardare i miei figli che dormivano. Io, non ce lo facevo più. E per questo che ho</p>	<p>/cu Judge, looking at Raffaele</p>

	chiuso.	turns back to profile shrugs car enters tunnel /cu Raffaele in profile
0.57	(vo) non è che questo processo è più difficile o più pericoloso di tanti altri.	
1.00		/cu Judge glances at Raffaele
1.04		/cu Raffaele glances at Judge
1.07	Roar of traffic increases	/ms backview both, end of tunnel in front of them. Zoom to rear vision mirror to Raffaele's eyes. Lights reflected on windscreen.
1.15		

This conversation differs from those typical of the earlier films in that its function is to convey information about the emotional state of the characters as much as about their context. It imparts information which will motivate Raffaele's dream later. Deictic markers situate the speakers in relationship to each other. It also offers proximal deictic orientation towards present time, and repeated distal orientation towards a time then, when threats were made and emotions generated, and spatial orientation towards an elsewhere. The judge's family circumstances are "back-story", or exophoric reference to a situation not specified in the text. Raffaele's words are, however, an anaphoric reference to the previous sequence where his father has his telegram addressed to him as, "Raffaele Giuranna, Giudice, Roma". The evocation of terrorist murder is a narrative hook, rather than a cataphoric reference, since it is Raffaele who will dream of death. Gesture - in this case turning to face an interlocutor in a confined space - is a deictic marker which makes the bridge with verbal orientation in performance.

By these means, the characters are firmly located within the diegetic world, and indications suggested to a recognizable

actual world outside it where judges are murdered.

This example is interesting because, although it seems to privilege phatic communication, there are in fact multiple visual and dialogue cues to proximal deictic orientation towards the context, or distal deictic orientation towards an elsewhere. In the former example the orientations are all towards historic persons and a historic time, in the latter to a plausible exterior world and time. The "elsewhere" referred to can also stand for a whole socio-political context. For example, the Commission of Enquiry into the collapse of the slum building in Le mani sulla città takes place in the archives and Office of Safety of the Municipal Council. The dialogue refers to the subsoil of Naples as a gruyère cheese, suggesting that it is impossible to know where the underground caverns, passages and holes are. The dialogue links story events to an actual Naples of the 1950s where Allum suggests that government services were incapable of checking the claims of builders, a situation taken advantage of by the Lauro administration which rejected a comprehensive development plan in order to speculate in the building of apartments. This situation resulted in several landslides and collapses of buildings.<sup>52</sup> The text thereby generates a metaphorical association of hidden geological features with hidden corruption. Some associations are visual as when Nottola visits the Monarchist politician at his home and finds him exercising on a rowing machine, anchoring the character firmly to a present time and space, and a clear reference to Achille Lauro, the shipowner and the strength of his position in relation to the Christian Democrats.<sup>53</sup>



Other examples are the references to black market cigarettes in La sfida which alludes to "the personal character of Neapolitan trade" in the immediate postwar period and the links between small scale entrepreneurial activities and the camorra<sup>54</sup>; At the end of the second episode of Cristo si è fermato a Eboli Giulia's questions to her son, Carmelo, about his father orientate towards a situation within the frame where a father is absent in America, and to a general context outside the diegesis in which large numbers of peasant men left the land and emigrated.<sup>55</sup> The 'Man of Power's' references to a set of photographs which can be used to clear Carmine refer to the common mafia tactic of destroying the reputation of opponents.<sup>56</sup> The deictic markers are cues to the spectator to make the inferential journeys which will bring the external frames of reference into play.

### Conclusion

Through an examination of the codes and conventions of realist cinema in Rosi's films, we have seen that he uses techniques familiar in mainstream cinema, those of illusionism and expository cinema, but allies them with another familiar narrative form, the investigation to place his enquiries on a political plane. The use of composition in depth and an accumulation of metonymic detail works towards narrative transparency, the illusion that this is a real and natural world visible through the fourth wall of theatrical space. Rosi's cinematic language therefore has a strongly referential function towards a context.

Geada has suggested that the problem arises from the films' claim that truth can be reached from the juxtaposition of

opinions, testimonies etc which the films collect for the spectator. The denotational stress of the mise en scène has as its effect:-

"... por um lado, ocultar a manipulação cinematográfica como caução de objectividade, por outro lado, sujeitar essa manipulação a uma reprodução mecânica e simplista da realidade e dos acontecimentos, ..." <sup>57</sup>

[... on the one hand, to hide cinematographic manipulation in the name of objectivity, and on the other hand to subordinate this manipulation to a mechanical and simplistic reproduction of reality and events...]

This could also be considered part of what Fiske and Hartley suggest is a strategy of bourgeois realism and its inheritance.<sup>58</sup> Realism as a mode suppresses the constructedness of the text and stresses the individual struggle to attain truth. The establishment of the truth of cinematic representations is important for a director who claims to be engaging with political situations. It is also a necessary choice for one using the investigative form in order to show how and why some facts and situations are clearly visible and others are rendered invisible.

In Chapter 1 we have demonstrated how Rosi constructs himself as an 'auteur' acceptable to the film industry. In Chapter 2 we have examined narrative paradigms for exploring the themes which mark him out as a serious director, whose work shows both consistencies and development over time. This Chapter has analysed the texts themselves in detail in order to demonstrate how the range of meanings is controlled. This analysis contributes to the study of Rosi's films and also to the question of authorship by identifying the rhetorical strategies by which meaning is organized, and authorial

authority established.

The control of meaning is, as we have demonstrated, achieved through realist cinematic techniques. We have also seen that Rosi uses the rhetorical devices of expository film to move onto the conative register in order to draw attention to points and persuade of their validity.

In the next chapter we will, therefore, examine the elements Rosi takes from the world of contemporary Italy and the ideological position presented in these films.

1. CROWDUS, GARY & GEORDAKIS, DAN: "The audience should not be just passive spectators". Interview with Francesco Rosi in Cineaste, vol VII, no 1, p 6.
2. Rosi interviewed by Karsten Witte in KOSCHNITZKI, R, SCHÜTTE, W, SEILER, A J & WITTE, K: Francesco Rosi (Reihe Film 28, Karl Hanser Verlag, Munich, 1983) page 59.
3. CROWDUS, GARY: "Personalizing Political Issues: An Interview with Francesco Rosi", Cineaste, v XII, n 2, 1982, page 42.
4. NOCHLIN, LINDA: Realism (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971) page 13.
5. BAXENDALL, LEE & MORAWSKI, STEFAN (Eds): Marx and Engels on literature and art (International General, New York, 1974) pp 114-115.
6. NICHOLS, BILL: Representing Reality (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991) page 168.
7. The process of evaluation started quite early in the 1950s and now provides a vast number of texts. The most important reevaluation of the films took place at the Xth Pesaro Film Festival in 1974 and resulted in a collection of critical essays - MICCICHÉ, LINO: Il neorealismo cinematografico italiano (Marsilio, Venice, 1975). In the 1980s Gian Piero Brunetta's history of postwar Italian cinema revealed by the number of sections dealing with neorealism the nature and extent of its importance as a cultural phenomenon, with which successive generations of filmmakers and critics have to come to terms.
8. LIEHM, MIRA: Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present (University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1984) pp 131-132. The ten points



were published in Films et Documents in Paris in 1952.

9. WILLETT, JOHN (Ed): Brecht on Theatre (Eyre Methuen, London, 1973) pp 108-9.
10. Michalczyk claims that Rosi had first become exposed to Gramsci's ideas through his contact with the art historian, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, when hiding with the Resistance in Florence in 1943. See MICHALCZYK, JOHN J: The Italian Political Filmmakers (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Cranbury, NJ, 1986) page 21.
11. After Rosi gave up his law studies he too entered into these cultural debates - "... mi sono messo a disegnare e a studiare per conto mio. Studiavo storia dell'arte, storia, estetica, leggevo Croce, Labriola, Gramsci, tutto per mio conto ma con un'applicazione da obbligo, non solo per il piacere di leggere. Era come se andassi a scuola." - interview in TASSONE, ALDO (Ed): Parla il cinema italiano, vol I, (Il Formichiere, Milan, 1979) page 280.
12. CLARK, MARTIN: Antonio Gramsci and the Revolution that Failed, (Yale University Press, Yale & London, 1977) page 225.
13. NICHOLS, BILL: Ideology and the Image (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981) pp 239-240.
14. LOVELL, TERRY: Pictures of Reality: Aesthetics, Politics, Pleasure (British Film Institute, London, 1980).
15. Lovell, page 82.
16. "Ora, io non credo che ogni volta che io faccio un film devo esprimermi attraverso un'ottica necessariamente politica. L'impegno in un film non è solamente e necessariamente politico. Può essere anche cercare di capire una società attraverso la sua cultura e attraverso alcuni fatti... E una ricerca della verità più ampia, della verità umana, della verità culturale del paese..." My interview with Francesco Rosi, 1 June 1987, in Appendix One.
17. Speaking of his collaboration with Gore Vidal on the screenplay of Dimenticare Palermo, Rosi said, "... Ma fare un discorso sulla Sicilia e sulla mafia oggi significava apportare radicali innovazioni. ...Insieme abbiamo pensato alla droga come oggetto della campagna elettorale perché questo ci consentiva di parlare di quella connessione tra potere economico, potere politico e potere criminale senza la quale non è possibile alcun discorso, oggi, su questi temi e queste realtà." Interview in SESTI, MARIO: "La droga sulla città" in L'Espresso, 11.2.1990, page 71.

18. LYOTARD, JEAN-FRANÇOIS: The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987) page xxiv.
19. Tassone, page 291.
20. Nichols, Ideology and the Image page 173.
21. SILVERSTONE, ROGER: Framing Science (BFI, London, 1985).
22. Nichols, op.cit. page 181.
23. Nichols, op.cit. page 174.
24. GILI, JEAN: Francesco Rosi: cinéma et pouvoir (Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1976) pp 44-49. The first nine sequences take Giuliano's death as the point of reference. The Viterbo trial of Gaspare Pisciotta then places his death in the past and the flashback sequences function to illuminate points raised in the trial, as do the two subsequent sequences showing the death by poisoning of Pisciotta in prison in Palermo. The final sequence places us in a new present, that of the murder of the mafioso D'Annunzio, ten years after the Viterbo trial.
25. KEZICH, TULLIO: "Scusi, mi racconta una storia? Sì, c'era una volta il Sud...", La Repubblica, 16.12.1980.
26. Ellis suggests that newsreaders are permitted to address the camera directly because "designated as politically neutral by TV itself". Direct address is only one of the strategies used to "breed a sense of the perpetual present." ELLIS, JOHN: Visible Fictions (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982) page 134.
27. JAKOBSON, ROMAN: Selected Writings, Vol. III, Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry, Edited by Stephen Rudy (Mouton, The Hague, 1981) pp 23-26.
28. CIMENT, MICHEL: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Avant-Scène Cinéma, n 289-290, 1-15.6.1982, page 10.
29. RICOEUR, PAUL: Time and Narrative, Vol. III. (University of Chicago Press, London, 1988) page 163.
30. Ricoeur, pp 180-188.
31. Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film.
32. BAZIN, ANDRÉ: What Is Cinema, Vol I (University of California Press, Berkeley, California, 1967) page 50.
33. Bazin, pp 34-36, and "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism" in Vol. II (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1971) pp 16-40.



34. GILI, JEAN: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Ecran, 83, 15.9.79, page 55.
35. For example, JANNUZZI, LINO & ROSI, FRANCESCO: Lucky Luciano (Bompiani, Milan, 1973) interweaves contemporary photographs of Luciano, his associates and the places associated with them, with stills from the film which look remarkably similar. The screenplay of Uomini contro contains illustrations and photographs from contemporary journals which were used in the film's design; the use of a blue flare in the night attack scenes was justified by research on the particular type of magnesium flare used in the first world war. The position of Giuliano's body in the opening sequence is based on contemporary photographic evidence (and is incidently reproduced in the position of Santiago Nasar's body in Cronaca di una morte annunciata).
36. THOMPSON, KRISTIN: Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1988) pp 207-8.
37. BURCH, NOEL: Theory of Film Practice (Secker & Warburg, London, 1973) pp 23-24.
38. Burch, pp 26-27.
39. BORDWELL, DAVID: Narration in the Fiction Film, op.cit. page 77 - "... the image can be in the syuzhet's present, while the sound can be in the past (eg, the auditory flashback), or both image and sound can be in the past. Image and sound can even be presented as occurring at different moments in the fabula past, as in Francesco Rosi's Illustrious Corpses, when a flashback to a trial retains trial dialogue on the sound track while presenting images that go back to the commission of the crime."
40. MONACO, JAMES: How to Read a Film (Oxford University Press, NY, 1981) pp 134-6.
41. MCMAHON, BARRIE & QUIN, ROBYN: Real Images (Macmillan, Melbourne, 1986) pp 193-6.
42. FISKE, JOHN: Introduction to Communication Studies (2nd edition, Routledge, London, 1990) page 96.
43. ELAM, KEIR: The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama (Methuen, London, 1980) page 37.
44. Zavattini defined the "film-lampo" as, "Questo tipo di film che riproduce un fatto di cronaca nei luoghi dov'è realmente avvenuto e che interpretano coloro stessi che ne sono stati i principali protagonisti, nasce dal mio vecchio desiderio di adoperare il cinema per conoscere ciò che succede intorno a noi, ma in un modo diretto e immediato, mentre l'altro modo, quello dei racconti



inventati, è un modo indiretto e mediato." in ZAVATTINI, CESARE: Neorealismo ecc. Ed. Mino Argentieri (Bompiani, Milan, 1979) pp 87 & 89. Here Zavattini seeks to justify his own aesthetic choices as unmediated reality.

45. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Introduzione" in VISCONTI, LUCHINO: La terra trema (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1977) pp 12-15. Rosi particularly mentions the work of the great Director of Photography, G R Aldo, "Si muoveva tra quelle pareti accecanti di bianco o macchiate di croste e di umidità, in mezzo a quei visi segnati dal sole e dal vento, dando l'impressione di volersi impadronire della verità per trasferirla sullo schermo senza alternarne il senso di profonda autenticità."
46. LUKACS, GEORG: Studies in European Realism (Merlin Press, London, 1972) page 6 - "The central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in character and situations. What makes a type a type is not its average quality, not its mere individual being, however profoundly conceived; what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present at their highest level of development... rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and epochs."
47. Ricoeur, page 114.
48. Bordwell, pages 17, 62, 77.
49. CULLER, JONATHAN: Structuralist Poetics (RKP, London, 1975) pp 164-6.
50. Elam, pp 72-74.
51. MACCABE, COLIN: "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on some Brechtian theses", in Theoretical essays: film, linguistics, literature (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985) pp 34-9.
52. ALLUM, P A: Politics & Society in Post-war Naples (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973) pp 36-37.
53. Allum, Chapter 9.
54. Allum, page 39.
55. CLARK, MARTIN: Modern Italy 1871-1982 (Longman History of Italy, vol 7, London, 1984) pp 270-271.
56. "La mafia può uccidere senza togliere la vita, basta la distruzione morale dell'individuo da screditare e costringerlo a comportamenti atipici, anormali" in PANTALEONE, MICHELE: Mafia e antimafia (Tullio Pironte Editore, Naples, 1992) page 149.

57. GEADA, EDUARDO: Cinema e Transfiguração (Livros Horizonte, Lisbon, 1978).
58. FISKE, JOHN & HARTLEY, JOHN: Reading Television (Methuen, London 1978) chapter 8.

## CHAPTER 4

THE IDEOLOGICAL WORLD OF ROSI'S FILMS

In the preceeding chapters, we have examined narrative and rhetorical strategies in Rosi's films, some of which recur often enough to enable them to be identified as constitutive of authorial style.

Rosi's strategy of using cinematic realism allied with its narrative counterpart, the investigation, has been identified. His realism is epistemological in that he works on the assumption that it is possible to know the nature of the processes which structure knowledge. The choice of realist strategies also marks him out as a serious filmmaker, inviting assessment of his work in the wider context of postwar Italian film making.

In this chapter we will consider these films' representation of political institutions and of personal relationships in a societal context. The history of postwar Italy is extremely complex and it is not the function of this work to trace minutely the links between a single event and its presumed equivalent representation on celluloid. Firstly, film is not a direct reflection of a social reality but the depiction of a reality refracted through institutional practices and individual talents and concerns which are themselves part of a context, and secondly Rosi is a director who carries ideas around with him for many years<sup>1</sup>. Nonetheless, the choice of institutions and situations is significant in that Rosi's purpose is not merely to bear witness to their oppressive or corrupt nature and then "to state them before the public in order to raise their consciousness"<sup>2</sup>, as the neorealist



filmmakers attempted to do. In most of the films under discussion Rosi attempts not only to state the problems, but to add comment and critique.

We have also suggested that the desire to uncover a meaning underneath the surface can be considered a political strategy.

As Annette Kuhn suggests:-

"In producing meanings, representations may in effect shape our understanding of the world we live in. This is a process of ideology, which in one of its several definitions is understood precisely as a society's representations of itself in and for itself, and the ways in which people both live out and produce these representations. In a divided society ... ideologies can be heterogeneous and meanings contested - and indeed ideology is commonly associated with power or hegemony, which suggests that meaning is never neutral, but always caught up in relations of power. At the same time, though, ideology works to conceal this fact from us. If meaning presents itself as already there, immanent and not constructed, then representation in a way invites us to adopt a reflectionist stance. Ideology, in consequence, rarely proclaims itself as such, but is invisible, naturalized. Unravelling the work of ideology calls first for it to be denaturalized."

To examine the representation of social phenomena, either events, institutional practices or the actions of protagonists representing institutions, or the context of generalized situations in contemporary Italy, such as rural emigration, life in the Mezzogiorno, is therefore to examine relations of power in that society. All of Rosi's films address in various ways the workings of power relationships. We have already alluded to an interesting and distinctive feature of Rosi's films of how they attempt a critique of society and political institutions using the codes and conventions of mainstream cinema.

We will now consider the ideological stance of these film

texts through examining the "instructions" relative to the communicative project of the films, and which can be attributed to the implied author. These "instructions" correspond to Bettetini's "conversazione testuale":-

"... ogni testo audiovisivo prevede lo svolgimento di un'azione di approccio alle sue forme significanti da parte dello spettatore e contiene dentro di sé elementi concreti per guidarla e indirizzarla: si potrebbe dire che è costruito perché il recettore "versi" se stesso nel modo previsto dal progetto comunicativo sui segni del testo e, quindi, in un certo senso, "con-versi" con il testo..."<sup>4</sup>

We will attempt to assess the level of competence which the implied reader is assumed to possess in order to be able to decode textual cues and inferences.

Here Eco's notion of intertextual frames - frames of reference which authorize and orient interpretation - is useful.<sup>5</sup> At various points in the narrative, the reader will receive cues to take "passeggiate inferenziali" outside the text in order to bring to bear areas of prior experience and knowledge (genre schemata, intertextual references, etc).<sup>6</sup>

In metafictional works, such as investigations and framing narratives, where aporia is a structuring principle, cues to the construction of possible solutions to enigmas will be a constant feature of the text. If the aim of films with a social or political agenda is to suggest that all is not what it seems, then an alternative to the hegemonic reading has to be constructed.

# 1. Political power: Legal and illegal

## The church

Interestingly for an institution which claims access to "truth", the metaphysical claims of the Catholic church are

never mentioned in the films, although this aspect may form the content of intertextual frames brought to bear on depictions of the church. Although evocations of the power of institutionalized religion occupy very little space in considerations of the mechanisms of power, they are none the less telling, enabling societal and political relationships to be expressed in additional ways. They are also remarkably consistent over the fifteen films concerned.

The church's cultural role is evoked through the ritualized customs of religious observance. The marking of social boundary situations (weddings and funerals) parallel the disruptive boundary situations which are the films' point de départ.

There is some acknowledgement of Catholic culture as a mass, popular culture in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli in the sequences where the Baron mentions local shrines and patron saints, and where Levi looks at Don Trajella's naïve paintings of minor, Southern saints. The South is thereby also signalled as 'Other', whose cultural representations differ from the North. We will return to the evolution of representations of the South in these films at the end of this Chapter.

In addition, the festivals which appear on the margins of events (the village festival in La sfida, the blessing of the crops in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli, the fireworks and processions of the festival of Santa Rosalia in Dimenticare Palermo) may have narrative functions, but they also are indicative of the succession of generations and of traces of historical events which form part of the temporal realism of



the text. Ricoeur suggests that rituals and festivals allow access to what he calls mythic time, one of whose functions is speculative, setting the actions of ordinary time and human life in a broader frame.<sup>1</sup> In Carmen, for example, the gestures of the women as they invoke the madonna are not those of clichéd mariolatry, but raise questions about the survival of pagan practices, the role of religion in the life of women, the necessity of some kind of pact with a deity or protection for the disadvantaged, in the absence of a just society.

One image of the madonna recurs from film to film, and that is the hispanic mater dolorosa, with sad, dark eyes - and a halo of stars in neon lights. This figure is rich in connotations of female resignation, and at the same time of the allure of the madonna as a figure of female power (within a prescribed sphere). It symbolizes the power of the institution. The vulgarity of popular religious imagery is evoked but not commented upon.

The church is also judged in its social role, which is predominantly that of a repressive power. This is summed up by the initial procession of Il momento della verità. Here the mise en scène emphasizes the restricted space in which the porters have to carry the statue of the madonna, and the weight of the wooden platform, the difficulty of manoeuvring the statue out of the church. It provides a visual metaphor for the oppression of the institution. Similarly, in Cronaca di una morte annunciata, the church is both a social forum for the community (where Bayardo San Román is observed and discussed) and a moral arbiter which appears to sanction the murderous action of the Vicario brothers, and, by extension,

to be implicated in the exercise of repressive gender power relations. After murdering Santiago Nasar, the first action of the brothers is to rush to the church to divest themselves of moral responsibility.<sup>8</sup>

That the institution is anachronistic is emphasized repeatedly, by the archaic character of its rituals, and by the eccentricity of persons associated with it. Thus, in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli, the church (like the government) is seen as uninterested and incapable of improving the lot of the peasants. Don Trajella is marginalized and despises the peasants; the Baron has friends in power, but is allarmingly eccentric and medieval in his devotions. In Dimenticare Palermo the presence of the church has been reduced to picturesque stops on the tourist circuit, and to irrelevance. The sequence of the nuns dancing the minuet in eighteenth century habit puts the emphasis on the institution's failure to adapt.

That the institution maintains its power through economic interests and through collusion with the economic power of a particular social class is suggested at several points. High-ranking churchmen are present at celebrations of economic profit (laying the foundation stones in Le mani sulla città and, with the addition of a rabbi, in Dimenticare Palermo) and at occasions of group solidarity (the funerals of the powerful in Cadaveri eccellenti). At these ceremonies churchmen are depicted by the side of the military, a configuration repeated in the procession of Il momento della verità and the priest ministering to victims of firing squads in Uomini contro. The compromised nature of the institution, and by extension the

organization of power in society, is indicated cinematically by narrative contiguity.

In La sfida, it is interesting to note that the representative of the church is depicted in close proximity to sequences depicting the camorra. But it is the outward trappings that are shown - the spectacle, the religiosity, the superstitious aspect. The fact that Vito ostentatiously gives money to the church before the statue of the madonna evokes a whole range of reflection on the parasitic nature of the church and its grip on the population. The motif is repeated in Lucky Luciano with the association of the priest and the gangster in the visit to the cemetery of Lercara Friddi.

Institutionally the church is often evoked by baroque church buildings which, as we will discuss in the next chapter, have a powerfully connotative function. Size and architectural volumes, complexity and richness of decoration suggest both the financial and social power of the institution, and the labyrinthine methods by which it cements its alliances with the sections of society depicted within these buildings.

The association of the Catholic church and political life is represented most clearly in portrayal of Christian Democrat politicians, particularly in Le mani sulla città and Cadaveri eccellenti. The former film delineates the basis and exercise of Christian Democrat power by showing the Mayor and Nottola buying votes; it also alludes to the instability of the exercise of Christian Democrat power by making plain that one of the narrative goals of the film, the resolution of Nottola's problems, is dependent on the consolidation of political configurations<sup>9</sup>. Cadaveri eccellenti, as we shall



see, demonstrates this reality through the cynical words of the Minister.

The one constructive reading offered is Rocco's suggestion in Tre fratelli of the church's positive cultural role, as the only place where his peasant mother could go to experience great music.

Interestingly, Rosi's representation of the Catholic church is consistent. There are no references to the effects of the Second Vatican Council after 1968, or to the results of attempts at modernization which respond to the secularisation of society and which Allum identifies as resulting in a "plurality of cultural systems"<sup>10</sup>. The church is therefore evoked as a generic and symbolic entity.

### Political Power

As we have seen, the operations of legal and illegal power are a constant preoccupation in Rosi's films. Narrative disruptions are used as starting points to turn the spotlight on power blocs whose 'real' nature is uncovered, and that of the agencies by which their influence is maintained. The opposition, untruth/truth, is therefore a recurring structuring element in the films' narrative. Explanations or assumptions which might be considered natural or unproblematic are questioned and contested; rhetorical structures make assertions about the nature of the exercise of power depicted in the films. The following sections will illustrate the assertions as to the character of legal and illegal power.

### The world of party politics

The exercise of political power in the sphere of local or national government is at the forefront in Le mani sulla

città, Il caso Mattei, Cadaveri eccellenti and present to some extent in Eboli and Dimenticare Palermo. Rosi reserves some of his most telling and communicative sequences for confrontations between the investigator figures and representatives of Christian Democrat or right-wing factions which have clung to power in the postwar period.

These conflicts between political factions take place in the South. Although politicians may resemble each other physically (all male, middle-aged and of middle height), the left is clearly distinguished from the centre and right factions by virtue of their actions and the critiques contained in their dialogue.

Using Le mani sulla città, we will discuss how political party politics is dramatized as conflicts between moral and ethical systems and ideologies. The left-wing is represented by Councillor De Vita (played by a "real" Councillor, Carlo Fermariello) and the centre by Dr Balsamo, whose caring profession permits a positive political reading.

Political party conflict is reflected in the film's narrative structure. The film's narrative events are structured into very complex and highly communicative sequences. A frequent pattern is to have one or more characters present or represent an idea (or represent a system of values), another present or illustrate an antithetical position and, in the final term the synthesis takes the form of illustration of the effect and/or context of the first two. The first 14 sequences generate a large number of enigmas and narrative hooks to be developed in later sequences. Mechanisms of power are explored, generating anaphoric references back into the text, which help explain

previous plot elements. The culmination of the references takes place in the pre-penultimate sequence in the Council Chamber. In a complex chain of 11 scenes in this Council Chamber sequence, the interplay of thesis and antithesis illustrates the process of political accommodation between the Centre and Right parties which reaches its synthesis in reconciliation between Nottola and Maglione, and Nottola's election as Assessor. It is left to the communist Councillor, De Vita, to comment on the synthesis. He functions to demolish transparency ie, the reception of the final synthesis as natural. He embodies Gramsci's idea of the organic intellectual, denouncing and making plain the processes of corruption and oppression. As a counterpoint, throughout this long sequence, Balsamo reiterates moral issues being flouted by perversion of the democratic process.

The mise en scène of the council sequences is careful to indicate by body position and gaze direction that factions are facing each other. It is given to left-wing representatives to be accusatory and to link right-wing politicians with corruption. Right-wing politicians, such as Maglione, are defensive<sup>11</sup>. The Mayor is represented as corrupt, or at best aiming to make his administration "relatively" more moral. The enquiry into the collapse of the slum building allows the realities of building speculation to be displayed. It is inferred that certain politicians are able to get building licences in three days, whereas private citizens have to wait six months to two years. The dialogue of representatives of the centre (Balsamo) and left (De Vita) contains constant references to legality, the rights of the citizen, the public



good. The dialogue of Maglione, Nottola and representatives of the right describes, amongst other abuses of power, the workings of clientelismo, so that the film shows in action the process by which sections of the population 'trade' their democratic rights, their vote, for security by attaching themselves to a notabile (Nottola) who can give them access to jobs or housing in return. The system of "legalized *prepotenza* ("the rule of the strongest")" is illustrated cinematically<sup>12</sup>. How the notabili manipulate the democratic system is illustrated at several points - by the mayor distributing money to those made homeless in the Vicolo Sant'Andrea, by Nottola's trip to the restaurant kitchen to buy votes, amongst others. Most significant is the long sequence mentioned above, which suggests amongst other things the access that those who achieve power have to State funds. It is the Christian Democrat, De Angeli, who makes the oblique but decisive reference to the pot of gold of the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, thereby ensuring the capitulation of the Monarchist, Maglione<sup>13</sup>.

The fact that Nottola is played by the method actor, Rod Steiger, does however lead to narrative tensions. On the one hand, his considerable performance skills and previous genre personae prompt a reading of the plot as an isolated individual case and are a stimulus to identification with a character. On the other, his presence provides the necessary 'strong' villain, whose actions conduct us through sequences (such as the sessions of the municipal council) which otherwise might be less than riveting. Through the figure of Nottola we are shown ruling class ideology in action as he

explores various strategies of legitimation of his own power position.

By showing how Nottola and Maglione exercise their power and manipulate the political system to their own advantage, the film offers a critique of the political system as a whole. The 'meaning' of the collapse of the slum building is that the democratic system is perverted to the advantage of a corrupt governing class. Power is shown in the hands of a particular section of the bourgeoisie, perpetuated within it, and closed to the petty bourgeoisie, working classes and peasantry. These latter are depicted as without power, either economic or political. Indeed, contact with any other class for the purposes of the exercise of democratic government is conspicuously absent. Ritualized conflict in Rosi's films becomes important in stressing that inter-party conflict is, in fact, the playing out of factional interests in a hermetic world closed (or difficult of access) to outsiders. This theme recurs in Rosi's films and, as a subsequent section will show, finds its parallel in criminal organization and exploitation.

This pattern we have observed in Le mani sulla città is repeated in Il caso Mattei where the names of Christian Democrats are used to evoke the factions which Mattei used to protect ENI - Don Sturzo, Scelba, De Gasperi, Engineer Valerio, Vanoni, Fanfani<sup>14</sup> - and generically the political bargaining that went on between parties, business and State bodies.

Those who occupy the upper echelons of government look remarkably similar - the Minister present at the unveiling of

the model in Le mani sulla città, differentiated from the Neapolitans by his height and tweed coat; the tall, fine-featured, arrogant politicians in Cadaveri eccellenti. The satirical treatment of the guests in the sequence of the Pattos party in that film is structured to show how power is exercised, maintained and legitimated:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/camera movement</u>
0.00	faint jazz dance music	/la ls large, blue painted room full of people from hs in foreground to ls in background. Rogas & Minister enter from l in centre, sit on white sofa, look around.
0.21		/hs Rogas, hunched shoulders, looks r, plain background.
A 0.23	<u>Minister</u> : Non si lasci	/hs Minister, relaxed, arms
B	ingannare dalle apparenze	along back of sofa, looks r at Rogas
0.26	(vo) Rogas.	/hs Rogas, turns to look l at Minister
0.27	sembrano tutti sicuri di	/hs Minister against fawn
A	reggimento, ma hanno tutti paura. Forse più paura di prima. Quando la festa sarà terminata, scapperanno. Scapperanno da tutte le parti. Questa notte cambieranno letti e case.	background briefly occupied by torso of man & woman with sequinned handbag. Minister smiles
0.42	<u>Rogas</u> : Perché? Hanno	/hs Rogas turns l, perplexed expression
B	paura di chi?	
0.45	<u>Minister</u> : Penseranno che	/hs Minister
A	io e lei eravamo d'accordo e che la sua improvvisa apparizione qui si è stata preparata.	leans forward, serious expression
0.55	Caro Rogas,	/hs back of Minister's head
	i gruppuscoli come quelli di Galano a noi fanno comodo, e anche ai nostri amici del partito comunista.	lh, Rogas hs centre, looks l at Minister
	<u>Rogas</u> : Amici!	looks r
1.04	<u>Minister</u> : Lei sa perfettamente qual'è la situazione. Il mio partito che mal governa questo paese da ormai trent'anni sarà obbligato a mal governare insieme al	looks l at Minister with amazed expression. Minister leans back & out of frame.
A		/hs Minister, arms along seat, confident expression, clear background
1.14	(vo) partito comunista. E	/hs Rogas expressionless,



- probabilmente anche lei, turned towards Minister  
caro Rogas, farebbe  
meglio il suo mestiere se  
al posto mio ci fosse già  
il Signor Amar, il capo  
di quel partito.
- 1.22 Questo Ministero della /hs Minister  
A Sicurezza funzionerebbe;  
e mi divertirei anch'io smiles  
vedere il Signor Amar se-  
duto sulla mia poltrona  
che perseguita lui i  
gruppuscoli.
- 1.30 Rogas: Sí, bene, e noi, /hs Rogas, nods, looks l  
cosa dovremmo fare?
- 1.34 Minister: Continue! /hs Minister, gesticulates  
Continue! Continue a confidently  
dar fastidio ai  
gruppuscoli fin dove  
potete spingerli. gesticulates, half smile  
Arresti, fermi, per-  
quisizione, però sempre con  
l'autorizzazione dei  
1.45 magistrati.

Here the Minister's confident and cynical assertions describe a shift in political alliances, which we have seen illustrated in the earlier part of the sequence. Galano, leader of the revolutionary Gruppo Zeta, is indistinguishable from the other upper middle class guests and is on first-name terms with the Minister; yet he is addressed as "uno stronzo intellettuale di provincia" by the "grande autore progressista", Nocio, who is proud to be communist, catholic and bourgeois. Linda Coremans suggests that the décor, colour, dress and gestures of the guests, and the Minister's emphasis on the words "giocano", all contribute to an emphasis on the theme of spectacle and appearances which:-

"... se situe ... sur un axe "vérité" - "mensonge", qui joue un rôle beaucoup plus fondamental dans le "système global" du film et auquel s'ajoutent d'autres associations comme "manipulation de la vérité" - "version officielle des faits" - "presse", qui se trouve dispersés dans des syntagmes divers."<sup>15</sup>

In fact the sequence illustrates the use of the rhetorical device of paradox to show that representatives of political positions which are usually considered to be antithetical, are in fact, by virtue of their class origin, similar. The dialogue also emphasizes the interplay of coercion and consent in the formation of a grouping of class interests. The large, white, statue of Pattos in the party sequence alludes to the way in which élites legitimate their power by celebrating the lives of individuals in art, thus masking the activities of the collectivity. It is echoed at the end of the film as the camera tracks Rogas and Amar, past ranks of classical busts, to the room in which they meet and are shot. The final shot in the murder sequence is a high angle one from the 'point of view' of a classical statue. The text thereby emphasizes the mechanisms by which power is perpetuated in a particular class, and implicates that class in the murder.

The anti-democratic nature of this class is also alluded to in the mental process shots of Rogas recalling the occupants of the official cars leaving Judge Riches' house. One possible inference raised by this sequence is to the 1970 coup attempt led by Prince Valerio Borghese, which was said to be supported by elements of the armed forces, the carabinieri and the police<sup>16</sup>.

Besides the ritual social gatherings which cement the relationships between those in power, and the use of commemorative art to mask collective interests by extolling individual excellence amongst the élite<sup>17</sup>, the texts up until Cristo si è fermato a Eboli show the media being manipulated in the interests of those in power. A change takes place with

Eboli as the focus moves from the observation of a power élite, to consideration of the consequences of social transformation and the situation of the Mezzogiorno.

We can identify a slight shift from a confrontational situation between left and right-wing ideologies to a more monolithic, class-based opposition between the political élite (who have power) and the middle class, working class and peasants, who have no power.

Rosi's films to 1976: Emblems of institutional power

As in all of the films, the agencies of government, the judiciary, the police and the media are all depicted as working to protect and serve the interests of those in power. The institutions through which the power of the ruling classes is exercised are clearly shown through the actions of representative individuals. The litany of names in Il caso Mattei makes plain the political groupings used by Mattei in the interests of building up a strong ENI, but it is suggested that Mattei was ultimately unable to combat the factions which he claimed to use like a bus, hopping on and off as it suited him. The power blocs examined in relation to Mattei's death are not only witness to this failure. By introducing an international dimension, the anachronistic nature of Italian political power is suggested. Mattei himself stands, again by antonomasia, for an entire technician class which, by virtue of its class origins, is excluded from governmental power, although it does wield political power at various levels, from the running of State enti to low-level local bureaucracy.<sup>18</sup> The political class is in this way shown as strong enough to use the effects of social change. The maintenance of



political and economic alliances among groups invested with various forms of power is shown in action.

The cinematic representation of the tension between power systems in their personal and public expressions can be seen in the following transcription of a sequence from Il caso Mattei.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/camera movement</u>
.00 .06	<u>Rosi</u> - Adesso passami la diapositiva del petroliere americano, quello che incontrò Mattei a Montecarlo: fu nel '60 credo	/ls sepia photo of oilfield /hs sepia photo of white, middle-aged male with carnation buttonhole.
.07 A	vo <u>interpreter</u> - That completes the picture of the international market. We think you Italians ought to raise your prices.	/hs picture comes to life & puts spoon to mouth.
.11	<u>Mattei's interpreter</u> - Dice che se questa è la situazione del mercato internazionale noi italiani e cioè l'ENI ... dovrebbe... dovremmo aumentare significativamente i prezzi.	/la ls very ornate dining room (Hotel de Paris, Montecarlo), white & gold colours, pillars and vaulted ceiling; table and 4 persons centre, quite small.
.21 B	<u>Mattei</u> - Beh! Gli dica che è esattamente il contrario di quello che devo fare io. Io sono capo di	/la pa table. American & int 3/4 backview in foreground, Mattei & his interpreter facing them in centre.
.28 C	un Ente dello Stato e ho il dovere di procurare al mio paese un prodotto che sia al minor prezzo possibile.	/ms Mattei facing camera, columns & vaulted ceiling behind him
.32 A	<u>Mattei's interpreter</u> vo - Mr Mattei thinks that being the Head of a State Corporation and in that position he thinks he should keep prices as low as possible.	/hs American
.35 B	<u>Mattei</u> - No, guardi... sia più chiaro... può darsi che non abbia afferrato bene il concetto... Gli dica .. che in Italia.. la politica dei	/la pa table, all participants same size, very ornate background

- .51  
D       prezzi       la       decidiamo  
noi...  
è finita l'epoca del  
gattino...  
Mattei's interpreter -  
Ma.. ingegner Mattei, non  
credo sia molto facile..  
far capire loro la storia  
del gattino.
- 1.00       Mattei - No.. glielo  
dica, può essere simpa-  
tico... Poi.. è un  
esempio chiaro...  
avanti...  
Mattei's interpreter - Mr  
Mattei want me to say now  
there is a story (vo)  
which present very  
clearly our situation.  
There is this bunch of  
big dogs. They are  
having soup & there is  
soup for everyone. But  
there is a small kitten  
on the side, he would  
like to take part but  
there is this big dog  
that just threw the  
kitten away and with one  
hit breaks its spine, you  
see. We think we've been  
the kitten for too long.  
Either we get out of this  
scene or we have to grow.  
We don't want to be the  
kitten any more.
- 1.10  
E       1.13  
C       1.23  
A       1.25  
1.31  
E       1.37  
1.40  
D       1.55  
1.57  
F
- American... Go ahead.  
Interpreter - The fact is  
we're going ahead; we  
don't need your pipeline  
to Bavaria.  
Mattei's interpreter -  
Dice che non intendono in  
nessun modo utilizzare il  
nostro prodotto di  
oleodotto in Bavaria.  
Mattei - Ma.. come  
fanno...  
Mattei's interpreter - Me  
l'hanno detto... Ne  
vogliono costruire uno  
anche loro da Marsiglia.  
Mattei - Ma, scusi.. chi  
glielo ha detto a lei?  
Mattei's interpreter -  
Loro... prima. Lei mi
- /ms interpreter facing  
Mattei 3/4 backview at rh  
side  
.  
/rs ms Mattei's interpreter  
3/4 back-view at lh side,  
Mattei centre with ironic  
expression  
.  
/la hs American v large at  
lh side, looks back & left.  
His interpreter small,  
centre  
.  
/hs M, ironic smile, looks  
left  
.  
/hs American, looks bored &  
puzzled, turns right  
.  
/pa Mattei's interpreter &  
Mattei  
.  
/hs American turns towards  
his interpreter  
/hs interpreter 3/4 looking  
left  
.  
/pa Mattei's int & Mattei  
.  
Mattei looks round  
/cu American as A  
/la pa American & inter-  
preter backview foreground  
at frame edges, large.  
Mattei & his interpreter  
centre, small. Columns &  
vaulted ceiling in  
background. Bottom edge of  
frame v dark.

- aveva interrotto,  
ingegnere...
- Mattei - Da Marsiglia?  
Mattei's interpreter - Da Marsiglia.
- Mattei - Ah, io con questo fatto di non capire la lingua.. è un disastro.. Ho bisogno di parlare direttamente con la gente! Scusi, lei capisce l'italiano?
- 2.16 Interpreter - Sí.  
G Mattei - Oh! Ecco... Il nostro oleodotto è diretto, Valle Padana, Svizzera, Germania. Se voi, col vostro partite da Marsiglia dovete fare un arco che non finisce più; dove la convenienza? Perché non vi volete servire di noi? Anche questo mi sembra un po' politico...E una ripicca. La via economica è la nostra.
- Interpreter - He says their line coming up through Switzerland is direct.  
Our line coming from Marseille will be much more circuitous.
- 2.39 American - Yes.. yes..  
F ask him about Tunisia.  
Mattei's interpreter - Il signor domanda che cosa ha l'intenzione di fare in Tunisia.
- 2.49 Mattei - Ho l'intenzione  
G di costruire una raffineria
- 3.00 (vo) con la collabora-  
A zione del governo Tunisino.
- 3.04 American (vo) - No.
- 3.06 Interpreter - Non ci ri-  
H uscirete, la raffineria sarà costruita dalla nostra compagnia, tutt'al più con la collaborazione di un'altra delle compagnie del consorzio petrolifero...
- Mattei - Senta.. gli
- Mattei turns to face interpreter who is at rh frame edge
- /ms Mattei slightly l of centre, faces interpreter across table, interpreter backview, rh side
- Mattei smiles and projects charm
- /la pa shot F, Matteo & interpreter facing, centre
- /pa Mattei & interpreter, Mattei smiles
- /cu American as A
- /hs Mattei 3/4 looking left as H
- /la pa rs of shots B & F, American & interpreter in centre, mural behind & ornate amphora in centre



	chieda se invece di costruirla in due costruiremo in tre.	
	<u>Mattei's interpreter</u> - Mr Mattei says why not consider taking ENI as a partner.	
3.26	<u>American</u> - I don't deal with oil salesmen, I deal with oil men.	/hs American, asymmetrical shot with ornate jar at lh
3.33	<u>Mattei</u> - (after pause)	/la pa shot H
H	Cos'ha detto? Dica...	
3.44	<u>Mattei's Interpreter</u> -	/pa shot F but slightly different angle, nearer to interpreter
F	Eh.. Dice che lei è un venditore di petrolio non un petroliere. Della raffineria non se ne parla neanche.	
3.51	<u>Mattei</u> - Andiamo. La colazione è finita. Però prima gli dica solo questo, che il colloquio di oggi se lo ricorderà per tutta la vita. Parola di Enrico Mattei. Glielo dica.	/la hs Mattei looks l reframe as Mattei moves
3.58	<u>Mattei's Interpreter</u> - Ma... Well gentlemen, I'm afraid this is the end of it. Good bye, gentlemen.	/la pa. Mattei stands at left, mural behind him, American seated with his interpreter at right Mattei off
4.02		/Shot F, Mattei missing
F		
4.08		/ecu American's head from back, turns right and nods
4.11		/la els hotel lobby, v brown & blue, very ornate columns & vaulted ceiling. Mattei walks at centre to r, followed by his interpreter
4.24	<u>Mattei</u> - E se lo ricordi anche lei che cosa sono i potenti.	/Ext ls Mattei, full figure walks forward left and stops, framed la pa, against light ie fuzzy & grey.
4.30		

In the context of the film as a whole, this sequence is unusually static; the mobile camera which is a hallmark of Rosi's style does not feature here. The conflict between power systems is dramatized in the confrontation between two men, Mattei representing Italian interests and the Italian State, and the American representing the powerful colonial

interests of capitalist big business on the American model. The meaning of the sequence is conveyed through the dialogue and through the *mise en scène*. Mattei's bargaining with the American oilman is a representation of institutionalized and ritualized male conflict. The text illustrates the fact that, in the latter half of the twentieth century, the exercise of power is not simply a matter of physical constraint, limiting the freedom of others. It is about language, who controls it and who constructs definitions and meanings. Mattei is depicted as at a disadvantage because he does not have access to the language of his opponent. His performance indicates a style of power characterized by force - of gesture and personality - and charm. The mere listing of dialogue in the published script<sup>19</sup> suppresses the impact of what Fairclough calls the visuals which accompany the verbal part of discourse.<sup>20</sup> Mattei seeks to persuade through the exercise of charm, signified by the direction of his smile, and his posture, and he fails. In a situation of faltering relations of power, Baudrillard suggests that "*seduction becomes nothing more than an exchange value, serving the circulation of exchanges and the lubrication of social relations.*"<sup>21</sup> The positioning of the characters expresses conflict metaphorically. They are also placed in an ornate dining room, where low-angle camera positions emphasize the visual richness of the environment, the repetition of columns supporting interlacing vaulting on the ceiling. At a connotative level, the *mise en scène* evokes "a cultural lifestyle which distinguishes a status group with a special identity in society"<sup>22</sup>, that of the wealthy aristocratic or

industrialist classes which could afford a leisure lifestyle, and counterposes to it the white collar functionaries who embody the new power orders. In the late twentieth century wealth and power combine not in inheritance but in multinational corporations. The role of visual excess and the evocation of spatial relationships will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter.

The judiciary in Rosi's films certainly do not conform to Voltaire's ideas of the separation of power spheres. They are far from aloof from the legislature and from business. The finding of Salvatore Giuliano's body in the courtyard of the house of the lawyer, De Maria, subsequently implicates the latter in a complex web of links between the institutions of law and the mafia. Only Judge D'Agostino is shown, in his conduct of the Viterbo trial of Pisciotta, to be impartial and just.

The mise en scène of Cadaveri eccellenti stresses the association of power with the concept of putrefaction and corruption. Rosi has said that he finds cinema alien to the construction of metaphor,<sup>23</sup> but the shot/reverse shot montage of Judge Varga and the mummified corpses in the opening sequence of the film provides a graphic illustration of simple metaphoric association. The figures of the Judges are all associated semantically with corruption and deviance - Judge Varga's spotted hands; Judge Sanza and the unnaturalness of the city; Judge Rasto and a pathological inability to form normal human contacts (represented narratively by the sequence of obsessive hand washing and self-punishment); President Riches with his negation of the rights of the individual



symbolizing power at its ultimate limits where it signifies itself, rather than any façade of democratic participation. The final visualization of Riches as listening via headphones to the meeting in the park between Rogas and Cusan provides a graphic metaphor of control.

In Rosi's only war film, Uomini contro, male attitudes and behaviour patterns which provoke violent conflict are embodied in particular, emblematic characters. General Leone is the representative of the classes which hold power, and in whose economic interests the war is waged, ie the aristocracy and upper middle classes. His ritual challenge of exposing his person and staring at the enemy is interesting because it does not result in his death, and is commented upon by his military subordinates. Its representation is anti-heroic. The Austrians are an undifferentiated enemy, the struggle in terms of the film's discourse is between opposing Italian class interests and sensibilities. The older system of social relations triumphs finally by annihilating Lt Sassu, the representative of the socially-concerned middle classes. The emotional reaction of outrage at the end is tempered by appreciation of irony from the perspective of changed social power relations some 60 years after the first World War. However, as we have seen in our examination of Rosi's use of the realist mode of representation, what his investigations frequently uncover is the survival of class alliances and the edifice of institutional practices which supports them.

#### The media as metaphor of control

An interesting difference between the early films and those produced after 1978 can be seen in the use of representations

of the media. These representations have two functions. On the one hand they function as 'helpers', enabling additional areas of diegetic information to be plausibly introduced.

On the other hand, Hall suggests that:-

"As social groups and classes live, if not in their productive then in their 'social' relationships, increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an 'image' of their lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces, can be coherently grasped as a 'whole'. This is the first of the great cultural functions of the modern media."<sup>24</sup>

Media representations therefore have a social function providing a metaphor of control as those in power are shown manipulating facts and controlling access to meaning.

Few of the early films are without representatives of the press<sup>25</sup>. The exercise of power is not shown at the macro level of press ownership, but at a micro level where access to information is limited. The press conference or journalistic enquiry allows questions to be raised, lines of enquiry and preferred meanings to be cued. They also allow the politics of disinformation to be expressed visually. Figures of authority in Salvatore Giuliano are shown limiting the time in which journalists have access to the bandit's body. Journalists are used to voice the questions which will inform the enquiry. Mattei is shown as giving partial or erroneous information about the presence of oil at Cavriaga. Rogas in Cadaveri eccellenti is shown giving out the clichés of official police communiqués to journalists, and watching Groba, the Head of the Political Section, manipulating



information selectively.

References to television are used to signal the presence and importance of national mass information systems. Both Cadaveri eccellenti and Il caso Mattei feature large numbers of television monitors within the frame. Linda Coremans has suggested that, in the former film, these function to expand diegetic space and to create a cinematic logic to the story events.<sup>26</sup> However, they also provide the basis for an ironic or subversive reading of the official news broadcasts several sequences later, which aim to construct a reading of events as provoked by young fanatics.

In Il caso Mattei, television inserts are used to show Mattei's manipulation of the media to justify his actions, and the professional practice of media institutions tending to construct representations of the famous as powerful individuals, rather than as examples of institutional practices themselves.

Television inserts occur much less frequently in the later films (as in those films set in a historical time predating the advent of television!). In Tre fratelli, television sets are seen in bars, bringing the reality of urban terrorism and institutional surveillance into a less violent, rural world. The political conflict which finds its expression in terrorist activity is symbolically opposed to rural tranquillity and yet at the same time constitutes a metaphor for the violence done to southern culture through mass emigration for economic reasons.

Similarly, conversations in Dimenticare Palermo are used to explain the changed nature of the mafia, which is now



concealed behind legitimate businesses. That the mafia is tightly entwined with legitimate power structures, and how power blocs shape public opinion, is graphically illustrated by the changed "stories" of news bulletins following Carmine's capitulation to the Man of Power. As in Il momento della verità, cause and effect are in close temporal proximity.

Still photographs occupy textual space in most of the films from Salvatore Giuliano onwards (C'era una volta and Carmen being rather obvious exceptions!). They generally function as proofs, or witnesses, to a situation<sup>27</sup>. At times they are used in a distancing mode, especially when they constitute "sudden impossible events"<sup>28</sup>, such as photographs suddenly appearing to come to life. In these shots it is the direction of the gaze of the subject of the photographs which is important in establishing the relationship of photograph to spectator. Generally they betray the presence of an enunciating subject, a sentience constructing a point of view. At other times, as we have shown, they fulfil the function of anchorage of the image to its context.

### Criminal power

Rosi's films expose corruption in high places and question the operation of the fundamental democratic processes. Power is depicted as a desirable end in itself, the retention of which involves illegal actions and alliances with criminal elements. The ordinary man or woman in the street (or field) is depicted as largely ignorant, or disadvantaged, and certainly helpless. For the spectator to share the feeling of helplessness would be at odds with the goal of Rosi's investigations. The films need to generate a feeling of indignation sufficient to

engender what Furhammar and Isaksson call the 'we'-feeling, which is such a potent weapon of propaganda?<sup>29</sup> The spectator also needs to be empowered by greater knowledge at the end of a film than at the beginning.

Explorations of the nature of criminal power are important in solving these problems. Illegal action is not depicted as just a tool of those who misuse power. It also stands by antonomasia for all power in the contemporary political situation and, as Umberto Eco has suggested<sup>30</sup>, it is a powerfully persuasive rhetorical device.

Illegal power is power without its cloak of legitimacy. There is nothing which can legitimate it; it does not rely on consent; heads of criminal organizations or groupings are not elected and are only answerable to those within the organization, that is to say, with the same economic aims. From film to film, these points are made sufficiently clear so that the internal logic of illegal action is visible. The spectator is also invited to decipher and master the semantic field within which the actions and utterances of representatives of illegal power take place. In Lucky Luciano, for example, "justice" means killing those who oppose your economic interests, and "peace" (as we have seen from the example already quoted) is the state which ensues once opposition has been eliminated by the same violent process of "justice".

Violence is essential to this type of political narrative. Death or violent action commonly constitutes the initial disruption. More importantly, as Stuart Hall points out, it:-

"... signifies the world of politics as it ought not

to be. It shows conflict in a system at its most extreme point. And this 'breaches expectations' precisely because in our society conflict is supposed to be regulated, and politics is exactly 'the continuation of social conflict without resort to violence': a society, that is, where the legitimacy of the social order rests on the absolute inviolability of 'the rule of law'."

Violence for Rosi therefore indicates that social conflict continues unresolved and that justice has been perverted to the advantage of the powerful. From film to film we see that death, exploitation, misery and oppression are the effects of the exercise of illegal power. The films also show its fundamental nature, how it is exercised, by whom and in what contexts.

In Lucky Luciano there is the added paradox that Luciano looks respectable, mediocre even, but is in reality shown to be violent, vulgar and amoral, and implicated in international drug trafficking and corruption. The criminal in these films is not permitted the spurious glamour of mainstream genre representations. Their actions and dialogue make clear that their actions are illegal and for personal enrichment. Anslinger and Siragusa suggest that there are those in government, or positions of power, who do the same. They may look equally respectable.

By suggesting firmly the economic imperative at the basis of illegal power, the films assert an equally firm parallel with the world of legitimate politics. The problems of southern Europe/southern Italy/southern Spain in relation to the richer, northern countries is sufficiently familiar to any citizen with a television set and a basic grasp of politics to enable it to be inferred that economic oppression occurs in



the 'legitimate' world as well as in the world of the marginalized.

### Reading power

The presentation of information about the material basis of illegal power varies according to the marketing conditions of each film. All the films concerned, as we have shown in Chapter 1, have been destined for mainstream distribution and the differing level of "instructions" about how to read power relations may perhaps be attributed to differences in genre fashion and the needs of international markets.

Rosi's first film, La sfida, which draws on the gangster genre and was a popular, middle-market product, demonstrates how the camorra works through the story of Vito. A description of the manipulation of the agricultural market in the Naples area could be written through following Vito's rise and fall.

Other films, with the widest possible popular market in mind, resort more heavily to dependence on the dialogue to make absolutely clear how the plot is to be read. I magliari, for example, which starred Alberto Sordi, leaves its enigmas mostly unresolved as we follow the innocent and unhappy figure of Mario in his search for work in Hamburg. Fairly late in the film the confusion is resolved in a sequence in the warehouse, in which Herr Mayer, Martinez and Don Raffaello's dialogue explains the economic basis of the conflict with the gypsies, and how the "protection" of Don Raffaello will work. The bullfighting film, Il momento della verità, also uses dialogue in an unequivocal way. Early in the film Miguel asks others in his lodgings how they got work, and is informed of the use of the "prestamista" (who takes a percentage of the

worker's pay). The two following sequences briefly show Miguel engaged in two types of manual work. The dialogue of the third sequence consists of Miguel's complaints at exploitation and comparisons of his own situation with that of his peasant father.

Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Dimenticare Palermo, which were made for television distribution, also use dialogue to explicate action and plot premises. Eboli's rhythmic structure allows areas of ignorance about rural, southern life to be introduced, described, and then glossed. Since fascism was an important element in rural exploitation, the dialogue between the Podestà, Don Luigi, and Carlo Levi, is accorded a long sequence in episode 3. The conversation makes clear Levi's position on the marginalization of the peasants from decisions concerning their own destiny, and Don Luigi's blank incomprehension that anyone should care.

Uomini contro's budget destined it, as we have shown, for 1<sup>a</sup> visione distribution and it is to a large extent a one-premise film, that the real enemy of the troops is their own officer class rather than the Austrians. Action and dialogue increase Lt Sassu's political awareness as the film progresses.

Salvatore Giuliano is Rosi's most modernist and complex text, released at a time when box office receipts showed that there was a potential mass market for more challenging films. A great number of "passeggiate inferenziali" are necessary to make connections between sequences set in different time periods and involving different political entities. The voice-over attempts to get over this, by describing the relationship of EVIS to MIS, for example.

As I have argued earlier in this Chapter, Le mani sulla città, although linear in composition, also tightly integrates a communicative mise en scène and dialogue exposition to provide cues to hypothesis-making. It was not a success and Rosi did not return to these complex narrative forms for some time. Il caso Mattei, Lucky Luciano and Cadaveri eccellenti were produced as quality political thrillers, drawing on debates familiar to educated, left-wing spectators.

Tre fratelli, which returns to a complex temporal structure, includes terrorism firmly as an example of illegal power. The use of still photographs has already been discussed and an interesting example occurs at the start of the sequence of Raffaele's dream in Tre fratelli. As he turns over the thick pages of the judicial dossier on the murder of a magistrate, the camera assumes his point of view by placing the back of his head to one side of the frame. The dossier contains photographs of the police driver and young guard, the magistrate, and the terrorist attacker dead, and the young policeman and young terrorist alive. Their narrative function serves to motivate the dream of Raffaele's own assassination, calling on resonances with earlier sequences in the bar and with his family. The photographs are at the same time communicative and ambiguous. They are communicative in that the visuals, the expressions and pose of the two young men express honesty, openness and a positive disposition in the case of the smiling, blond policeman, and truculence and a difficult nature in the case of the scowling student. This preamble to Raffaele's dream is carefully structured in three sub-sequences:-



<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/camera movement</u>
0.00		/ms Raffaele profile looking to r, sitting in bed. Turns page of dossier
0.04		/ms over Raffaele's right shoulder at dossier, turns page
0.10		/cu bw photo of dead old man in suit in car. Caption reads "H Vinciguerra, Giudice Istruttore presso il Tribunale in Roma. Particolare foro proiettile mortale"
0.15		/bw photo cu dead driver. Caption "Brigadiere V Continsio, conduttore di Vinciguerra"
0.19		/bw photo ecu wound
0.22		/ " " pa dead driver at wheel, pan r to judge in back seat
0.27		/bw photo cu hand with wedding ring, pan up r to hs dead judge, wound in matted hair
0.34		/rapid shot of bw photo bullet holes in window, hand turns page to ls dead youth at base of wall: "Cadavere del presunto terrorista N Braduelli"
0.38		/bw photo cu head, pan down r to gun circled on pavement
0.44		/hs Raffaele looking down
0.48		/bw photo hs smiling blonde policeman: "Agente di polizia V Esposito morto nell'attentato" Photo slips to r, reveals bw photo ms youth, sulky face: "Foto del presunto terrorista N Braduelli da studente". Zoom to ecu.
0.53		/Dissolve to cu dead youth.
0.57		/Dissolve to photo cu student
1.02		/Dissolve to photo cu Esposito
1.04		/Dissolve to photo ms Esposito dead in car, zoom to ecu
1.06		/Dissolve to photo ecu Esposito's wound from another angle
1.09		/Dissolve to photo hs Esposito smiling
1.13		/hs Raffaele, slight zoom as takes glasses off & looks down
	vo Nicola (echoing): Sai perché mi vogliono mettere fuori? Io lo so perché. Perché vogliono eliminare quelli che discutono, che danno fastidio, che non vogliono piegare la testa.	looks up
1.16	Comunque, non ho mai pen-	/hs Raffaele & Nicola sitting under tree

- 1.38 sato che le cose si possono cambiare sparando per le persone. /cu Raffaele in bed
- 1.44 vo Raffaele (echoing): Fra terroristi rossi e neri in galera ce ne sono ormai migliaia. I più hanno vent'anni. Davanti a loro hanno una vita. E /hs backview Raffaele & colleague in shiny corridor. Raffaele in robes, other in fawn suit with robe over shoulder. Uniformed police pass. Raffaele shakes head
- 1.56 un problema che riguarda tutti noi. camera tracks them
- C'è l'esigenza di condannare ma c'è anche l'esigenza di evitare che altri giovani passino al terrorismo; e per questi; cosa faremo noi? Come li ricupereremo?
- Colleague: Questo riguarda gli uomini politici, sociologici, educatori, non solo i magistrati. Io penso soltanto ai morti che fanno oggi, fra i quali potrebbe esserci anch'io, e magari ad acciappare l'ultima fucilata prima della fine delle ostilità e, francamente.. francamente, confesso che vorrei evitarlo.
- Raffaele: Sí, ma si deve trovarla, qualche forma di.. una soluzione insomma. Quale non lo so. Non riesco nemmeno a immaginare la strada, ma certo bisogna far presto.
- 2.47 Colleague: E tu credi di farcela con questa vita che non ti appartiene? /ha wide angle ls wide street; yellow bus moves to r & sweeps in front of camera so that passengers visible through windows, & into v wide road, grey office buildings on either side, to els. 2 white cars block its path.
- (vo) La scorta serve a poco. Le macchine blindate non bastano e anche se te lo danno può servire soltanto così a provvederci qualche secondo. Io ho smesso di avere abitudini fisse; cambio continuamente orari e itinerari. Mi mescolo tra la folla. Mi nascondo.
- 3.03 Screech of tyres, shots.

The time codes gives some indication of the amount of time

available to scan the black and white photographs and their captions - 4-5 seconds to read a photograph caption; 7 seconds to scan the body of the dead judge; 5 seconds to contrast the faces of terrorist Braduelli and policeman Esposito. The ideological position of the film is complex; the "instructions" about how to read the events conflict somewhat. On the one hand, framing and camera movements allow inferences to be made about the dead men. The young policeman's open, smiling face, Judge Vinciguerra's wedding ring and the terrible wound in his matted hair, the horror of the pathetically slumped bodies, allow access to imagined personal histories and familial tragedies occasioned by their deaths. It is left unclear whether the presumed terrorist is still a student, but the use of this label, together with his representation as young, with dark, curly hair and a surly expression connote a range of social phenomena. The disaffection of youth for whom no jobs are available; the rate of youth unemployment in the south; the distaste for manual work; revolt against a system of government which renders youth powerless and marginal - all these have been identified by social commentators and are familiar points of reference.<sup>32</sup> This background is what Rosi's image can rely on for its maximum effect.

Up to this point the visual organization and mise en scène suggest a 'tight' format taking the official line that stresses the criminality of terrorism and ignores its political rationale.<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, the visual and aural flashback to the conversation with Nicola allows the whole of that dialogue to



be inferred. It raises questions of the violence of capitalist exploitation of the worker, and the violent clashes and court cases between FIAT and their workers for wrongful dismissal in the late 1970s and early 1980s<sup>34</sup>. These are events of political importance with subsidiary connotations of emigration, racism and alienation. The language of each brother is also revelatory of class positions. Raffaele's dialogue with his colleague introduces the idea of risk of death to middle class professionals, which parallels that of the police. The field of reference connoted by this conversation is to kidnappings and killings by terrorist groups and to their mediation through official statements and media coverage. Raffaele himself, however, is obviously not a representative of a self-perpetuating political class (being the son of an obscure Apulian peasant). He is also depicted as a caring individual concerned at the waste of human life. By anaphora, his previous statement to his old schoolfriends in the village café is alluded to, and a position/assertion strengthened that "... il terrore è proprio quello che dice di essere - la sostituzione della persuasione con la paura; ma la paura ormai non è sentimento normale su cui costruire una società. La paura è un'eccezione, la regola dev'essere la fiducia; se no, come si fa a vivere?" The effect of terrorism is shown as the same as that of illegal power, thus valorizing a liberal, democratic power system, faute de mieux.

Illegal power is not depicted as glamorous. Rather it is violent, sordid and amoral. It is associated with conditions of social and cultural deprivation, and overwhelmingly with social stasis where lack of progress is to the advantage to

the criminal.

## 2. Gender ideology

### Male power as problematic

Films of the early group, from 1958 to 1976, give prominence to central, problematic characters which represent, symbolize or are emblematic of aspects of male power.

Power is seen to be embodied in a certain type of masculinity, characterized by physical energy taken to the level of excess in violent action; mental energy expressed as intelligence and cunning; and personal magnetism or charm - the erotic subordination of rivals. Characters rehearse male stereotypes which are delivered overtly to the screen by means of iconography and performance, that is, through metaphorical association. Covertly the ideological basis of society is signified through the mise en scène delineating the world of work, the world of the powerful, metonymically through painstaking evocation of social contexts. The films' mise en scène shows the trappings, the outward signs and signifiers of male power - book-lined studies; objets d'art and ostentatiously large lamps connoting wealth; offices with maps, banks of telephones and minions; esoteric dress codes etc.

Conflicts accrue around these emblematic figures when the narrative disruptions present oppositional readings to the inevitable nature of their power. Other institutionalized representations of male struggle which occur in the films include banditry, courtroom exchanges, local politics enacted in the municipal council chamber, national politics and the formation of political alliances, international politics in

the working of the United Nations, and war.

The later films, from 1979 onwards, differ from the earlier in that their central male characters are not emblematic of configurations of institutionalized power. Instead of rehearsing male stereotypes they rehearse male roles in contemporary society and attempt to work through a reflective and emotional, rather than violent, approach to social realities.

By the late seventies, terrorism in all its forms produces a crisis around the legitimacy of political institutions and the general framework of civil society. 'Film di denuncia' were no longer as popular as they had been. For many, Rosi amongst them, the rural, rather than the urban, aspect of Italian life became a more attractive option for discussion in the cultural sphere. It gave a space for reflection on self identity and national identity. This coincided with a marked shift in emphasis in the films under discussion.

Although the politics of gender has not been structured as an area of investigation and discussion, it is, undeniably, a source of narrative tensions in the post-1979 films and, as such, deserves examination. These later films mark a fundamental shift from the investigation of macro power relationships to the micro level of personal interactions in a social context. Conflicts and symbolic absences in the narratives indicate a crisis in representation and a difficulty in integrating previously successful images of Italian masculinity.

Western culture has engendered a large number of male myths, powerful masculine figures. Willis<sup>35</sup> suggests that "the myth-



making purpose is to impose order on disorder, to draw boundaries and set limits on what appears as formless and unmanageable", thus enabling an understanding of the unknown, or the irrational, making it less terrifying. Willis's view does, however, perpetuate an overarching myth, of the male figure as unproblematically dominant. By contrast, Chapman's view that "... gender stereotypes are the bearers of ideology, the channels by which power replicates itself, the means by which behaviour is prescribed"<sup>36</sup> allows a more critical analysis of the modes and manifestations of power in modern society. Rutherford explains the tensions inherent in the process of making myths of male power:-

"Masculinity is characterized by continual struggle to assert its centrality in cultural life, yet it attempts to ensure its absence, and to evade becoming the object of discourse. Heterosexual masculinity shifts its problems and anxieties, defining them as belonging to others....The myth of masculinity is its attempt to pass itself off as natural and universal, free of problems."<sup>37</sup>

The films examined here signal the presence of the problematic, representations of socially-constructed modes of masculine behaviour.<sup>38</sup>

Focalization in the films under discussion is on male characters who seek knowledge. We can identify a shift in emphasis in the films after 1976. The information sought in La sfida, Salvatore Giuliano, Le mani sulla città, for example, is of how power relationships work - the nature of the secret links which underpin the events of everyday life. From Eboli onwards, the central characters (and in Tre fratelli they are multiple) seek knowledge about society which will have a relevance to their present lives. Levi in Cristo

si è fermato a Eboli is depicted as intelligent, sensitive, analytical and intellectual. His memories set the narrative in motion and put in place reinterpretations of male power, represented by the Podestà, Don Luigi; the priest, Don Trajello; the 'americani', whose decisive, forceful action deracinated them, and then trapped them as they succumbed to nostalgia for traditional patterns of life. Levi's artistic ability, as well as his caring profession are pictured as permitting him access to the world of the 'other', the peasant. Significant of the shift in emphasis which we have identified is that it is the peasants, and especially women, who act as 'gateways' to an understanding of the magical, the irrational, and the emotional side of the psyche. These are elements which are not assigned value in traditional, masculine, culture.

In all the films, female figures and rural characters signify the access to memory and reflection, which is coded as more passive, emotional and less masculine.

Male figures are seen observing and analyzing a context, a social order. Point of view shots, cued by gaze direction proliferate. If knowledge is power, then the desire to know motivates these middle class, educated male characters, seeking to gain access to power. Enquiries into wider societal relations in the later films seems to indicate a recognition of the difficulty of controlling all the facts about a problem. The films between 1958 and 1976 have at their centre a complex problem or situation, which the narratives are successful in defining. Although the narratives cannot answer all the questions and doubts which

they raise about their central question, identification of areas of ambiguity or obscurity still represent a containment of sorts and control of the central question. The investigating characters in the films after 1979 seem to indicate, by their performance and by the areas in which they seek knowledge, that other, perhaps equally valid, social relationships exist.

In considering the ideological position of the films' discourse around gender, it is interesting to examine whether diegetic events and narrative resolutions come to the same or contradictory conclusions, and to do this from the point of view of the outcome for women. This is not the same as examining the truth of Rosi's statements about the lack of narrative weight given to female characters, such as:-

"In un Consiglio Comunale d'Italia fino ad oggi, tranne qualche rara eccezione, chi gestisce ancora il potere politico e il potere amministrativo sono gli uomini... Quindi, volendo fare un film di quel genere dovevo raccontare storie di uomini. Così nella storia di un 'tycoon' dell'industria, come Mattei, sono storie di uomini, non sono storie di donne...

... E una società nella quale gli uomini - secondo la mentalità del Sud... e di una società dove c'è la camorra, la mafia - hanno il sopravvento e la gestione di un certo potere. La donna in quella società è un personaggio sempre subordinato agli uomini. Esiste in maniera subordinata, e l'ho rappresentata in maniera subordinata."<sup>39</sup>

and, "I make films about power and institutions of power, and women are rarely there".<sup>40</sup>

From La sfida to Dimenticare Palermo women are, indeed, depicted as marginal to the exercise of public power but the films lack "instructions" to examine and contest gender power relations, which is in itself significant.

The investigations generally expose the basis of power as



exercised in institutionalized mechanisms for the subordination of particular classes and of a particular gender. La sfida and I magliari were made within more mainstream conventions and, interestingly, give more space to male/female relationships. In La sfida (1958) these are conventional. For example, the power base of the dominant male, Vito, in La sfida is shown in the tenement sequences where he is served by his (mainly female) relatives, and less intelligent companions. This is echoed by similar metaphors of family and community clustered around members of the camorra. Female figures exist to enhance the characterization of Vito and, in the case of Assunta, to provide narrative motivation. It is presented as 'natural' that a young man such as Vito will aspire to court an attractive girl and that he will wish to provide for her. It is also presented as 'natural' that female relatives' role is to support men by providing a domestic base and loyalty. The situation parallels that of class exploitation, but patriarchal relationships are not questioned.

I magliari (1959) is more interesting in terms of the gender relationships represented in that we are offered some access to the point of view of Paula Mayer. Her narrative function is to provide the focus of and link between several, overlapping narrative spheres, and to add another level of emotional involvement to Mario's story, which hers echoes. Miguelin, the stereotypical, macho male figure of the bullfighter in Il momento della verità (1965) succeeds by virtue of his personal skill, courage and determination. Ultimately he fails not only because of the greed of other

men, a metaphor for class exploitation, but also because he is a peasant and therefore has nothing to trade in the world of clientelismo. Female figures, with the exception of the American film star, are cyphers - the mother or whores - both equally exploited. Linda, the American star, exploits Miguel's sexuality. She therefore represents not only the disturbance and anxiety which can be generated by strongly autonomous female figures, but, through the metaphorical association of nationality, other power systems which are northern and alien, and which threaten the established codes of southern society.

We have seen that the image of the madonna, although used economically to cue certain economic and power relationships imposed by the Catholic church, is also an icon of femininity and sacrifice. Women are devoted mothers - Assunta's mother scheming for her in La sfida and Señora Vicario for Angela in Cronaca; Salvatore Giuliano's devotedly keening over his corpse or kissing his photograph; the stereotypical focus of hearth and home of Tre fratelli and Eboli. They are devoted wives - Assunta; the women of Montelepre in Salvatore Giuliano, the women of Cronaca; Signora Mattei and Raffaele's wife grieving at assassinated husbands; - or whores - the consorts of gangsters in Lucky Luciano or town whores in Cronaca and, by implication, American film stars in Il momento della verità. They are very occasionally workers - nurses in Uomini contro, stall-holders in Le mani sulla città, peasants and domestic servants; a doctor in Eboli and, unusually, a magazine editor and journalist in Dimenticare Palermo.

The relationship between Maglione and his female companion,

for example, is portrayed unsympathetically in Le mani sulla città primarily to add another layer of significance to his exercise of power, rather than to generate enough indignation to provoke examination of the mechanisms of her subjugation. Where women are presented as strongly autonomous characters, they are also represented as problematic in some way. Paula Mayer is represented as flawed by her deprived upbringing; she is sexually promiscuous and unwilling to consolidate her emotional commitment to Mario by leaving her husband. Her tragedy is that she is more aware of the realities of her political situation than Mario is. Although we have some access to Isabella's thought processes in C'era una volta (1967), her desire for self-determination is designated as willfulness and possession of an impossible character. It is very rare for the female protagonists of fairy tales to spurn the handsome prince! Linda, the American film star in Il momento della verità is sexually assertive, but functions in narrative terms only to add another layer to the exploitation of Miguel by her predatory and manipulative nature.

The female terrorist in Tre fratelli is portrayed as physically unattractive, and her stance verges on the grotesque. She perhaps represents the ultimate outsider in capitalist society and an escape from patriarchal order.

In contrast to all of the other representations of women in these films, Carmen is exceptional in being a strongly autonomous female character who is the focus of narrative events, whose degree of self-knowledge, independence, race and class all designate her as exceptional. Catherine Clément defines her function as disruption and Carmen as "the image,



foreseen and doomed, of a woman who refuses masculine yokes and who must pay for it with her life."<sup>41</sup> Micaëla accepts patriarchal power and fears male violence. Don José is an agent and representative of that power; his moral universe disintegrates when he leaves his ordered existence to follow Carmen. It is his lack of personal authenticity which results in his obsessive need for Carmen, for whom he has given up his ordered life, and ends in his murder of her. By his act he disrupts the 'perfect' couple, Escamillo and Carmen, two independent people, deriving strength from their own culture. Carmen has, however, seen her own death foretold in the cards. "Carmen is the sombre and revolutionary proclamation of a woman who chooses to die before a man decides it for her."<sup>42</sup> Her death does, however, leave the system she disrupts intact. The attractiveness with which these later female figures are cloaked also masks the persistence of archaic social relationships which are strongly hierarchical and oppress men as well as women. Cronaca di una morte annunciata (1987) is highly ambivalent in this respect. On the one hand, the static and conformist nature of Colombian society in the 1950s is shown as keeping the population in a state of adolescent irresponsibility, where a young man could be killed on suspicion of having disrupted patriarchal order. Angela Vicario, when asked if it was Santiago Nasar who took her virginity, replies, "He was my author", confirming the idea that women only became fully active human beings when sexually 'awakened' by a man. Whether or not it matters narratively with whom Angela Vicario lost her virginity, the social order of which it is a system is insufficiently contested in the

diegetic world. Prudencia Cotes, for example, tells her Vicario fiancé that she will not marry him unless he does his duty and kills Santiago Nasar. On the other hand men are shown as exercising total power in their domestic environment by their command of absolute obedience from female members of the family - Señor Vicario decides his daughters' quarrel by sending Angela's sisters home, and is obeyed instantly. Nahir Miguel orders his daughter out of her room, and Flora appears immediately.

Nostalgia for roots and uncomplicated masculine role models again cause problems in Dimenticare Palermo. Carmine's attraction towards Gianna awakens his interest in Sicily, but his resulting bad conscience brings his sexual jealousy out into the open where his vulnerability is noticed by the 'Man of Power'. Carrie's reaction is shown to be incomprehension. Possession of overwhelming macho instincts has the narrative function of motivating mafia attempts to compromise Carmine. Within the marriage story, it is signalled as excessive and difficult to resolve in the context of late twentieth century North America.

In Tre fratelli we see a trace on the screen of the crisis of the family in the concerns of Niccola and his dream of reconciliation with his estranged wife in Turin. In general, however, women and their concerns are a structured absence in Rosi's films. The far-reaching changes in the position of women in Italy after 1968 are ignored in Rosi's consideration of mechanisms of power. The increased numbers of articulate, well-educated women and the women's movement had cultural effects in mainstream as well as sub-cultural areas of

publishing and the media, which have made monolithic depictions of power structures more problematic. As Lumley has suggested, the most coherent attempts to "criticise the dominant institutions and 'ways of life', and to propose alternatives" have come from counter-cultures in the last twenty years<sup>43</sup>. We would suggest that these developments contribute to narrative tensions in Rosi's cinema.

The picture of gender social relationships is therefore at worst ideologically retrogressive and, at best, a problematic site where difficulties are suggested tentatively but do not start to be resolved. Only in Carmen can there be said to be a mismatch between a progressive reading of the resolution and a reading which sees the re-establishment of the patriarchal order.

As the early part of this Chapter has shown, lack of power features strongly in the films as the binary opposite in the power/powerlessness equation. Figures of powerlessness are significant. Societal codes based on personal power, the extended family, clientelismo are shown narratively and visually as at odds with the workings of the modern, capitalist State. In I magliari, for example, there are no examples of conventionally successful Italian male figures. Whether Tuscan or Neapolitan, all are depicted as second class citizens in the context of northern Germany. There are no females or extended families to support macho displays of masculinity. Totonno survives by using guile and deceit, but is humiliated and marginalized by Don Raffaele. The magliari transfer their allegiance to the latter, but his performance signals him as unbalanced as well as exploitative. His is the



classic macho mafia figure of "paranoid manhood wreaking order through destruction".<sup>44</sup>

By using the three brothers to exemplify three socio-political problems, Tre fratelli also illustrates the absorption of trans-class movements. Raffaele and Rocco, the judge and the reform school teacher, are both attempting to grapple with society's problems but only have the power to deal with symptoms, rather than causes - in Lyotard's terms, improving the system's performance rather than "guiding the nation towards its emancipation".<sup>45</sup>

Although presented sympathetically, Levi is a political exile and therefore politically impotent/deprived of power. Yet he is shown as possessing personal worth in the community through his medical role amongst the peasants. Donato Giuranna in Tre fratelli in old age has lost his power. His sons make decisions for him, another metaphor for the lack of validation of traditional, archaic culture. Cristo Bedoya is powerless to stop the murder of his friend. It is as though the very fact of his consciousness of the context of the society, rather than his compassionate, caring medical role, renders him doubly an outsider. Finally, the Prince's stand against the mafia in Dimenticare Palermo is shown as meaning voluntary imprisonment in the baroque, Palermo hotel, thus rendering him impotent in the struggle. Carmine's final refusal to accept "room service", or a similar fate, results in his assassination.

### 3. The theme of the Mezzogiorno

Analysis of the main narrative preoccupations of Rosi's films in Chapter Two identified the South as a constant theme.

Francesco Rosi is himself a southerner, born in Naples in 1922. He was, as we have seen in Chapter One, part of the generation of neorealism, the internationally regarded sector of Italian cinema of the immediate postwar period which aimed to bring to the screen the social reality of sections of the population ignored in Fascist cinema - the working class, peasants.

Farassino has identified one root of this strategy in a reaction against the Romanizing and Italianizing tendencies of fascism;<sup>46</sup> but it also marked a return to a strongly regional strand in Italian culture.

Rosi frequently acknowledges his training in neorealist cinema, but he also worked on a variety of films, including those classified as "neorealismo rosa", which used regional stories, melodramatic plots, actual lower class areas of city and country (rather than studio sets), but which did not attempt a critique of society or any analysis.

Rosi's concern with the South is, of course, paralleled by the continual presence of the area as a political and social problem in cultural discourse. By associating himself with Southern concerns, Rosi is adopting a strategy to mark himself out as a serious filmmaker, capable of engaging with the history of his own society and with complex societal problems. In this respect he is situating himself within a philosophical current initiated by Gramsci and with which subsequent generations of left intellectuals have all attempted to come to terms. The analysis of Southern society was fundamental to Gramsci's theoretical models and the intellectual had a key role in raising the consciousness of the southern peasants and

facilitating the alliance of peasants and northern proletariat. Sam Rohdie, in his discussion of Visconti's Rocco e i suoi fratelli, has suggested that Gramsci's "class alliance of Northern workers, Southern peasants and committed intellectuals, under the guidance of the Italian Communist Party, as the answer to the 'Southern Question', had been overtaken by events"<sup>47</sup> as early as the late 1950s. Rosi's films acknowledge a much more complex social and political situation in the South.

Rosi's treatment of the South has undergone an interesting evolution during his career and here we will discuss the differing concerns of this evolution.

In Salvatore Giuliano (1961) the South fulfils a dual function. It is both the "Africa a casa", an example of underdevelopment and the primitive which allows exploitation to become visible, the South shorn of its myths of happy peasants and, Rosi claims, a "... chiave per capire tutta la politica italiana successiva. La vicenda Giuliano è esemplare di tutta la storia d'Italia."<sup>48</sup>

The Mezzogiorno has often been understood as occupying the place of underdevelopment in a dualist conception of the Italian economy. The "imbalance or disequilibrium", lies between economically prosperous regions of the North and the backward, agricultural South, between advanced, modern and highly productive sectors of industry, and those which are not, between those in relatively stable, well-paid jobs and those in marginal occupations.<sup>49</sup>

Rosi's films not only investigate the disruption which the South signifies to the myth of prosperity and postwar boom,



but, in doing so, his films demonstrate the collusion between power blocs, in whose interests such dualisms are maintained. It is a short step from representing the South as a disruption which disturbs the scenario of booming economic prosperity, to laying bare the mechanisms of societal oppression, and the use of the South as a metaphor for problems in Italian society as a whole. The early sections of this chapter which have discussed legal and illegal power as it is exercised in the South reveal Rosi's more general concern with corruption, and the links between legal and illegal power systems.

The focus of the investigation in Lucky Luciano is on how the mafioso achieved power, how he maintained his power, and its effects. The film does not choose to investigate the causes of the mafia phenomenon but, through quite complex organization of the visual and narrative material, suggests the link between Southern poverty, social backwardness and conservative institutions (the Church) and the presence of illegal organizations.

Here the power exercised by criminal organizations like the mafia is used as a metaphor for legal power relations, where power is exercised by élite groups. They are shown as wielding enormous economic power, and that the basis of that power lies in the oppression and exploitation of others.

Rosi's films after Cadaveri eccellenti (1976) are also social dramas but differ from the earlier cycle in their emphasis on 'reflexive processes', memory and emotion. In the 1980s his films seek to explore the reality of Italian rural, peasant culture and to encourage an understanding of historical processes which underpin current situations. Although the

temptation is towards the evocation of esoteric rural practices, which, if we could only have access to them and understand them, would enable us to make sense of our non-rural lifestyles, the texts generate some anxiety about nostalgia as a mode to structure perceptions of reality. Reflection on past situations or social relations, or on an unfamiliar, Latin world are used to cue metaphorical associations with contemporary social realities, such as the lack of prestige accorded to agricultural work, the difficulties emigrants have in relating to new and old cultures.

At their more incisive, these reflections on the past allow Rosi's continual preoccupation with power and class domination to be addressed under the guise of a lyrical evocation of a rural world. The lure of nostalgia is, however, very strong. Staught and Turner go so far as to suggest that:-

"In short, bourgeois society which was the social and cultural manifestation of early capitalism is exhausted and with that exhaustion we are witnessing the disappearance of the possessive self and rugged individuality. As a result, nostalgia is a very potent mode for a moribund intellectual elite adrift from its<sub>50</sub> traditional culture and institutional setting."

However, the prevalence of appeals to nostalgia in the mass media of the 1980s and 1990s would suggest that it responds to a far more widespread desire in society.

Most pre-capitalist societies were organized into very hierarchical power relationships. Tre fratelli alludes, for example, to female subordination to the male in the hierarchy of rural society in the lyrical flashback of old Donato Giuranna to an episode during his honeymoon. By zooms, pans

and rack focus, the camera structures Donato and Caterina in relationship to each other in the context of the beach. When she loses her wedding ring in the sand, she calls him back into the frame, but it is Donato who is the active figure, who obtains the sieve and retrieves the ring, and who is uppermost in frame as they finally embrace.

The beauty of the images and use of the wide-angle lens, reinforces, rather than contests, a nostalgic reading.

In the film's present, it is Nicola, the youngest brother, who most resembles the stereotypical southern male, who is shown at most disadvantage in contemporary society. With less education than the elder brothers, he is emotional rather than analytical. His desire to dominate his wife and at the same time maintain a separate masculine role is a positive disadvantage in the northern social context. His dream of reconciliation significantly involves acceptance by his wife, and her submission to Nicola's sexual advances. His is the most overt fantasy about potency, in the sense of sexual power, although all three dreams have their basis in anxieties about power and control.

In the post-1979 films, women characters function as gateways to the possibility of a more authentic existence. Giulia in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (1979) introduces Levi to the world of the irrational, and emotional, and to peasant lore; the mother and Filumena in Tre fratelli (1981) to earthy peasant culture; Gianna in Dimenticare Palermo (1990) to Carmine's Sicilian heritage. Powerful and attractive though they might be, they are all agents in the achievement of male goals.



This tension in traditional societies between the male impulse to sexually annexe and dominate the female, and the institution of the family which works to prevent this annexation and domination of its female members can be seen in Cronaca di una morte annunciata (1987). Instances of the problems inherent in attempting to control male libido and male violence abound. The canary in the cage which Angela Vicario hangs from her balcony on the occasion when Bayardo first sees and falls in love with her, is a metaphor of her social position. She is caged within strict codes of conduct, and is firmly under the control of her family, her mother and sisters. The tragedy occurs because of the irruption into this irrational world of Bayardo San Román, the representative of northern, Anglo-Saxon, Caribbean culture. His materialism, his belief that everything has a price, is shown in the sequence in which he buys the Xius house for his bride. In effect he buys a virgin bride, and is unable to adapt pragmatically to the fact of her loss of virginity, the ultimate metaphor of escape from control.

The investigation is, therefore, not so much into the causes of the murder of Santiago Nasar, as into the social and cultural background of latin societies. As Thomas Elsaesser has suggested,<sup>51</sup> Cristo Bedoya's investigation soon ceases to be the main focus of the narrative, and the film gains an epic and mythic dimension as it explores the nature of Latin society, the role of honour and the power of the family. Through its treatment of the character and actions of Bayardo San Román, Cronaca di una morte annunciata, imposes conclusions about the deleterious effects of capitalism on

traditional society. The sequence where Bayardo buys the house of the widower Xius illustrates the clash between a system in which everything can be bought/has a price, and a static social system governed by conformity and rigid social convention. Although the absurdity of conventions is stressed by their effect on young and innocent protagonists, the film does not sufficiently contest the morality of that society. Foucault has identified the danger inherent in the seductions of nostalgia. As power structures become more anonymous and invisible, those on whom power is exercised tend to become more strongly individualized. The problem of class and gender power relationships has been displaced to the level of the individual and the personal.<sup>52</sup>

The South continues to be a preoccupation of Rosi's after 1987, but the impetus towards nostalgia becomes more problematic. At the same time, and fighting with the nostalgic impetus towards roots in a slower, less dehumanized world, is a tendency towards the demonization of the South. As Milly Buonanno and Erica Pellegrini have observed, the image of the "Mezzogiorno di fuoco" on television is a potent one and is associated with:-

"... il delitto, l'illegalità, la cultura dell'omertà e della violenza, le atmosfere cupe e luttuose, gli spargimenti di sangue, gli agguati e gli scontri armati..."<sup>53</sup>

Rosi's last feature film, Dimenticare Palermo (1990), problematizes the nostalgic. A more pessimistic ideological position obtains in Dimenticare Palermo. What seems to be being suggested is that the 'Sicilianisation' of Italian culture has now covered the whole country and that criminal

elements tightly control US and Italian society, basing their power of the traffic of drugs. Carmine Bonavia in Dimenticare Palermo combines both masculine and feminine modes. The conflict of the sensual, reflective, feminine mode and the decisive, violent, male southern stereotype provokes the narrative events. It is his 'southern' side which is shown as his weakness, leading to his death. The only successful male figure is that of the 'Man of power', the focus of violence and corruption. He is a metaphor of the illegal power which has spread out of Sicily, and into the northern world.

The leprous decay of the palazzi of the aristocracy and the life of the Baron, confined to his hotel by the mafia, are metaphors for powerlessness. That they, and by extension the social system of which they were a part, acquire a patina of nostalgic charm by contrast to the squalid machinations of the mafia is attested by Rosi himself.<sup>54</sup>

As we have already argued, the world which Carmine, the main protagonist of Dimenticare Palermo, discovers outside his hotel door on his honeymoon trip to Sicily is the classic one of tourist anxieties. The representation tends towards hyperbole as the streets are dirtier, the buildings more dilapidated, the social problems represented as extremely visible. As in television fiction, the South contains no positive heroes in Dimenticare Palermo. Carmine has to extricate himself from the clutches of the mafia by his own efforts, by capitulation. Once more, Southern criminality stands for the whole South. Rosi extends this so that the South, and southern power systems make evil visible.



Rosi's later work valorizes collective memories of the peasant past, the values of community and folk wisdom, but it also shows the tension between the values of hierarchical, archaic societies, and the modern drive for equality of opportunity. In general in the films the South of Italy seems to make social problems more visible, the soil is poorer, domestic comfort less, health care and education less, the social relations between the classes more antagonistic.

We have seen that the South is constructed as 'Other' - the site of problems in society which are displaced from the urban and day to day, to a world where displays of excess are licenced. This excess is signalled visually in décors of great visual beauty and connotative power, but also in excessive displays of performance, violence of gesture and situation. And the world where such performances are licenced is the Mezzogiorno. In British culture the celtic fringes often perform the southern function, that is, they are geographical areas where fantasy can be enacted, where emotion can be expressed rather than rationality reign, where other social relationships can be rehearsed. The South is a boundary zone where tensions in society are made visible; which can safely used as a metaphor for troubles rather closer to home; where an enemy can be named generically as "the mafia", and indicated by metaphorical allusion, to avoid having to be specific and name names.

In the 1980s, the South and the rural world was represented as more 'natural' and a repository of healthy, human values. It has been unable to sustain this representation, except perhaps in advertisements.

Unable to sustain a positive representation in the 1990s, given the lack of social structures with which modern women (especially) and men could identify, the South has succumbed to a scapegoat scenario. The revelations of corruption and the networks of the tangentopoli have been too similar to stereotypical representations of Southern power systems for the Mezzogiorno to escape being demonized as the place from which the evil part of modern society derives.

Francesco Rosi tried to transfer the problems of the South from a regional to a national plane when, in Tre fratelli he suggested that the mass emigration of the last 35 years, the lack of investment and consequent underemployment, were direct contributions to the sense of alienation in society, and to terrorism. However, representations of the South rarely delineate the economic and ideological reasons behind cultural manifestations. We consider that, when the South is represented as demonized, as ultimately and essentially evil, then dominant ideology cloaks the reasons for the situation and swerves away from critical examination. In the current political situation in Italy, it is likely that the South will continue to function as a boundary zone, where it cannot quite be assimilated into the realms of unproblematic discourse.

### Conclusion

Analysis of representations of power systems and of power exercised in gender relationships does suggest a clash of ideological positions.

The films' narratives, editing and mise en scène are structured to facilitate the investigation of dominant, ideology. What is presented by dominant ideology as natural,

is suggested to be a construction which masks the activities of a class-based, exploitative, repressive and self-perpetuating élite. In this respect, the level of knowledge and awareness to which the spectator has access is qualitatively and quantitatively different at the end of the films than at the beginning.

The level of constructedness of the "instructions" for an alternative ideological reading varies. Given that the films have been destined for a mainstream audience, and for the long shelf life of the art cinema circuit, it is not surprising to find that the images, arguments and evidence are tightly organized at key points to repeatedly suggest a preferred reading; at other points, arguments and questions are unresolved, or are raised so "loosely" as to be perceptible only to an educated, art cinema audience familiar with left debate.

Although it may possibly be argued that the ideology of patriarchal gender relations is another visualization of oppressive power masquerading as natural law, yet it is insufficiently represented as problematic. It would appear to conform to Angela Dalle Vacche's definition of Italian cinema as employing "homosocial" narratives "to represent fathers and sons in history and public life, while pushing mothers toward biology and the private sphere"<sup>55</sup>. Women are therefore marginalized or problematic. Only a young girl like Marta in Tre fratelli can be given space to exercise her charm because she represents no threat to the equilibrium. Although the later films more openly acknowledge the lack which is access to an emotional and magical world, it is men who are



represented as makers of history and culture. As such, the films do not offer a view which challenges this assumption. The gender ideology which is expressed in Rosi's films is, therefore, profoundly conservative and its unprogressive nature constitutes a problem area which expresses itself, as we have seen, in narrative unease and visual excess.

Narrative concentration on the representatives of criminal or institutional power also creates a problem. Representatives of other classes do not have so considered a voice. As we have indicated in our discussion of Rosi's rhetorical devices, the films' metalanguage organizes the texts to make plain the mechanisms for the maintenance of ruling-class ideology. Death and violence constitute the narrative disruptions which permit these normally naturalized mechanisms to be apprehended and examined. The films' discourses, however, close off other areas of contestation by limiting the representation of certain groups (such as women, the working classes, peasants). Concentration on societal problems, such as emigration, rural underdevelopment, drugs etc reveals a reformist agenda, rather than a commitment to revolutionary change, or alternative forms of government. The choice of rhetorical strategies organizes one ideological reading but, by the intrusion of ideological positions which cannot be contained by the films' discourse, they simultaneously endorse another.

We have seen that the structures of the Italian media industries are not conducive to the production of feature films which seek to expose the working of dominant ideology, and that social critiques have to be fitted into genre moulds if they are to achieve a mass audience. To quote Terry

Eagleton, even a reformist ideology may have some value if it helps "to illuminate the processes by which such liberation from death-dealing beliefs may be practically effected."<sup>56</sup>

The narrative disruptions which I have described here, and in Chapter 2, therefore use a double strategy of linking the personal and the political.

Metaphors of power are found in representations of male conflict. These are generally worked out within the codes and conventions of 'male' genres and representations of women are conspicuous by their 'structured absence', or marginalization. The organization of the narratives does, however, reveal an unease with socially sanctioned values and modes of action. Through explorations of emblematic male figures and behaviour patterns open to males in Italian society, the films show how societies represent and mediate their own internal structures and perceptions of them.

As we have seen, Rosi's treatment of his themes of power relations and the South of Italy is accorded some complexity and evolves over time. Critics are thus able to relate each film upon release diachronically to the context of Rosi's work as a whole and synchronically to a current societal context. The texts contain cues within them which point to political or social preferred readings. Even those films which require a greater level of audience competence in decoding inferences - Salvatore Giuliano, Le mani sulla città, Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano - assist the spectator by rhetorical techniques which reiterate the cues to interpretation. Films with a less complex and fragmented narrative structure are, through the use of the investigative narrative, able to deliver a level of

knowledge about the film's context and content which is qualitatively different at the end of the film from the beginning.

Rosi stakes his claim for serious consideration as a filmmaker who engages with important issues in Italian society in a range of strategies which have been discussed in this Chapter. The disruptions and anxieties structured into his films are also signalled visually. The next chapter will consider the role of visual excess and the organization of narrative space to express ideological conflict.

1. Rosi suggests that he develops his themes over the years, "sono anche modificati, approfonditi nella tecnica del racconto o anche nel modo di rappresentarli...", my interview of 28.7.1985, Appendix One.
2. MICHALCZYK, JOHN J: The Italian Political Filmmakers (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Cranbury, NJ, 1986) page 14.
3. KUHN, ANNETTE: "Ideologies", in Alien Zone (Verso, London, 1990) pp 54-55.
4. BETTETINI, GIANFRANCO: La conversazione audiovisiva (2nd edition, Bompiani, Milan, 1988) page 99.
5. ECO, UMBERTO: The Role of the Reader (Hutchinson Education, London, 1987) page 32.
6. ECO, UMBERTO: Lector in fabula (2nd edition, Tascabili Bompiani, Milan, 1986) pp 111-118.
7. RICOEUR, PAUL: Time and Narrative Vol. III. (University of Chicago Press, London, 1988) pp 104-8.
8. Interestingly, in Cronaca di una morte annunciata, Rosi isolates two power blocks in Colombian society - the military/economic and the Catholic church, claiming that "... i personaggi del mio film sono determinati nei loro comportamenti da un'origine culturale che li obbliga alla violenza da una parte, e alla mancanza di responsabilità individuale dall'altra." MORI, ANNA MARIA: "L'impegno della ragione, la forza dei sentimenti nell'universo di García Márquez", in La Repubblica, 14.4.1987.



9. Ginsborg identifies a feature of Christian Democrat exercise of power as the constant search for political allies, and a succession of unstable coalitions. GINSBORG, PAUL: A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943-1988 (Penguin, London, 1990) Chapter 5.
10. ALLUM, P A: "Uniformity Undone: Aspects of Catholic Culture in Postwar Italy" in Zygmunt G Barański & Robert Lumley (Eds): Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy (Macmillan, Basingstoke & London, 1990) pp 91-94.
11. One of the most enjoyable - and resonant - scenes takes place in the Municipal Council Chamber when a left-wing colleague of De Vita accuses the right-wing of having the dirty hands of corruption, and the following shot shows the right-wing benches waving their hands in the air, protesting their "mani pulite"!
12. CHUBB, JUDITH: Patronage, power, and poverty in southern Italy (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982) pp 22, 55-60.
13. Perhaps here Rosi is alluding to the manoeuvres of the Gava faction to bring local and para-state economic agencies under their control, and their absorption of the monarchists. ALLUM, P A: Politics and Society in Post-war Naples (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973) pp 299-301.
14. Don Luigi Sturzo was a left-wing, Sicilian, Catholic priest who launched the Partito Popolare Italiano with the approval of pope Benedict XV in 1919 and, with Alcide De Gasperi, tried to use the power of the Catholic vote to influence the Mussolini government. The post-war Christian Democrat party is considered to be the heir to the PPI. In the post-war period he was involved in regionalist politics and in international Christian Democrat organization. Mario Scelba was a right-wing Catholic politician, a virulent anti-communist and persecutor of trade union activity. De Gasperi fought for the establishment of a single Catholic party, and the principle of 'political unity' of Catholics. Engineer Giorgio Valeri was the head of Edison in Italy, another powerful public manager who profited from the strand of DC political thought which was opposed to too much State intervention in business. Ezio Vanoni was a left-wing DC politician and author of the 'Vanoni Plan' which aimed to reduce the economic differences between North and South in Italy. (See Ginsborg, op.cit; Allum, op.cit and Italy - Republic Without Government? (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1973); IRVING, R E M: The Christian Democrat Parties of Western Europe (RIIA/Allen & Unwin, London, 1979); KOGAN, NORMAN: A Political History of Postwar Italy (Pall Mall Press, London, 1966); Chubb, op.cit; CLARK, MARTIN: Modern Italy 1871-1982 (Longman, London, 1984).

15. COREMANS, LINDA: La transformation filmique (Peter Lang, Berne, 1990) pp 152-3.
16. WILLAN, PHILIP: Puppetmasters: The political use of terrorism in Italy (Constable, London, 1991), Chapter 6.
17. Stuart Hall suggests that 'élite persons' have colonised the means of history making in our society and dominate the news because power, status and celebrity are their monopolies in the institutional life of our society. Hall, page 78.
18. John Fraser, for instance, suggests that "the mass now recognizes that 'politics' is impossible, has become administration." and that consensus is managed "at the lowest and most powerless local levels" by technicians of the administration, thus fostering political apathy and conformism. FRASER, JOHN: Italy: Society in Crisis, Society in Transformation (RKP, London, 1981) page 94.
19. ROSI, FRANCESCO & SCALFARI, EUGENIO: Il caso Mattei: un "Corsaro" al Servizio della Repubblica (Cappelli Editore, Bologna, 1972) pp 118-121.
20. FAIRCLOUGH, NORMAN: Language and Power (Longman, London, 1989) page 27. "... talk is interwoven with gesture, facial expression, movement, posture to such an extent that it cannot be properly understood without reference to these 'extras'. Let's call them collectively visuals, on the grounds that they are all visually perceived by interpreters. Visuals can be an accompaniment to talk which helps determine its meaning...".
21. BAUDRILLARD, JEAN: Seduction (Macmillan Education, Basingstoke, 1990) page 176.
22. TURNER, BRYAN S: Status (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988) page 11.
23. "Le problème est celui de la transformation visuelle; la littérature se sert de métaphores comme de clés pour connaître la réalité. Le cinéma ne peut le faire", interview with Rosi during shooting of Cadaveri eccellenti in CIMENT, MICHEL: Le dossier Rosi (Dire/Stock, Paris, 1976) page 165.
24. HALL, STUART: "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect" in CURRAN, J, GUREVITCH, M & WOOLLACOTT, J (Eds): Mass Communication and Society (Edward Arnold, London, 1977) page 340.
25. "Cela m'est aussi nécessaire que la crème au pâtissier!... Les débats aux Nations Unies, à la radio et à la télévision italiennes me sont indispensables, puisque mes films traitent des rapports de pouvoir avec le public et ses intermédiaires. Et par ailleurs j'ai besoin d'éclairer de temps en temps pour le spectateur certains



aspects des problèmes qui ne pourraient être présentés autrement, sinon par des sous-titres" - Rosi interviewed about Lucky Luciano in CIMENT, MICHEL: Le dossier Rosi, page 155.

26. "La valeur représentative de l'image étant remise en question, il se crée un discours filmique sans référence à un espace ou à un temps "réel" ... et organisé de manière homogène, pour mettre en place un espace - temps propre au film. Le film marque ainsi un mouvement vers sa propre production, laissant voir les codes d'engendrement du texte." in COREMANS, LINDA: La transformation filmique, pp 119-123.
27. "C'est très simple, c'est notre civilisation de l'image. Une photo, c'est le témoignage de quelqu'un, d'une époque, c'est un moment arrêté de la vie de quelqu'un qui continue à vivre. J'adore les photos. Peut-être même que la photographie est à l'origine de ma passion du cinéma". CIMENT, MICHEL: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi" in Avant Scène Cinéma, 289/290, 1/15 June 1982, page 10.
28. BRANIGAN, EDWARD: Point of View in the Cinema (Mouton, New York, 1984) page 89.
29. FURHAMMAR, LEIF & ISAKSSON, FOLKE: Politics and Film (Studio Vista, London, 1971) page 186.
30. ECO, UMBERTO: La struttura assente (IV edition, Tascabili Bompiani, Milan, 1987) pp 172-3.
31. HALL, STUART: "The Determinations of News Photographs" in Working Papers in Cultural Studies No. 3 (CCCS, Birmingham, 1972) page 79.
32. Fraser and Sassoon show that, as employment statistics were published and student revolt theorized, the 'youth question' was extensively debated from the '70s onwards. See SASSOON, DONALD: Contemporary Italy (Longman, London, 1986) pp 110-120, and FRASER, JOHN: Italy: Society in Crisis/Society in transformation (RKP, London, 1981) pp 120-123.
33. In the 'tight' format, "... images, arguments and evidence offered by the programme are organized to converge upon a single preferred interpretation and where other possible conclusions are marginalized or closed off. A loose format in contrast, is one where the ambiguities, contradictions and loose ends generated within the programme are never fully resolved, leaving the viewer with a choice of interpretations." SCHLESINGER, PHILIP; MURDOCK, GRAHAM & ELLIOTT, PHILIP: Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture (Comedia, London, 1983) page 32.
34. SASSOON, DONALD: Contemporary Italy (Longman, London, 1986) page 141.



35. WILLIS, ROY: "Soap Opera as Myth" in The Times Higher Education Supplement, 12.6.81.
36. Chapman, "The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme", page 227.
37. RUTHERFORD, JONATHAN: "Who's That Man?" in Rutherford & Chapman, page 23.
38. It would be interesting to see a psychoanalytic reading of these films and their problematic, central male figures. Within the terms of this study, however, the analysis of forms of enunciation in the texts is far more communicative of ideological representations of gender difference.
39. See my interview of 28 July 1985 in Appendix One.
40. OVERBEY, DAVID L: "Rosi in Context", Sight and Sound vol. 45, no 3, Summer 1976, page 174. See also my interview of 28 July 1985 in Appendix One.
41. CLÉMENT, CATHERINE: Opera, or the Undoing of Women (Virago, London, 1989) page 48.
42. Clément, page 53.
43. LUMLEY, ROBERT: "Challenging Tradition: Social Movements, Cultural Change and the Ecology Question" in Zygmunt G Barański & Robert Lumley (Eds): Culture & Conflict in Postwar Italy (Macmillan, Basingstoke & London, 1990) page 119.
44. CHAPMAN, ROWENA: "The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme", in RUTHERFORD, J & CHAPMAN, R: Male Order (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1988) page 227.
45. LYOTARD, JEAN-FRANÇOIS: The Postmodern Condition (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1987) page 49.
46. FARASSINO, ALBERTO: "Neorealismo, storia e geografia" in Neorealismo. Cinema italiano 1945-1949 (EDT Edizioni, Turin, 1989) pp 22-24.
47. ROHDIE, SAM: Rocco and His Brothers (BFI, London, 1992) page 20.
48. DE MASI, DOMENICO: "Nel mio film non c'è la parola FINE: è una storia di mandanti e sicari che dura ancora", interview with Francesco Rosi on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Giuliano, Paese Sera, 5.7.1980.
49. Sassoon, page 17.

50. STAUTH, GEORG & TURNER, BRYAN S: "Nostalgia, Postmodernism and the Critique of Mass Culture", in Theory, Culture & Society, Special Issue on Postmodernism, v.5, nos 2-3, June 1988, page 520.
51. ELSAESSER, THOMAS: "Cronaca di una morte annunciata", Monthly Film Bulletin, v 54, n 641, June 1987, page 164.
52. FOUCAULT, MICHEL: Discipline and Punish. Translated by Alan Sheridan (Éditions Gallimard, 1975. 5th reprint, Peregrine Books, 1987) page 193).
53. BUONANNO, MILLY & PELLEGRINI, ERICA: "Mezzogiorno di fuoco. Come la fiction racconta il sud", in BUONANNO, MILLY (Ed): Non è la stessa storia: la fiction italiana. L'Italia nella fiction Anno 4 (Rai/VQPT no 117, Rome, 1993) page 111.
54. "Dans ce film j'avais aussi l'obligation de montrer non seulement une culture dégradée dans les pierres et dans les hommes mais aussi ce qu'elle était avant cette dégradation pour faire comprendre que peut-être il y avait alors des valeurs qui correspondaient à une morale différente de celle d'aujourd'hui." CIMENT, MICHEL: "Entretien avec Francesco Rosi", Positif 349, March 1990, page 13.
55. DALLE VACCHE, ANGELA: The Body in the Mirror (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1992) page 15.
56. EAGLETON, TERRY: Ideology (Verso, London, 1991).

## CHAPTER 5

MELODRAMA, VISUAL EXCESS AND THE TREATMENT OF CINEMATIC SPACE

We have observed how disruptions structure the narratives of Rosi's films. We have also seen how the type of disrupting events permit access to the political and ideological reading at the macro level of national and international political conflict, and at the micro level of societal and gender relationships. Tensions exist in the films between the heavily dramatic and emotional, and a 'documentary' or documented evocation of 'reality'; between the realist mode of filmmaking and very beautifully composed visual images, with a particular affinity towards baroque architecture.

We have seen that narrative disruptions which set the syuzhet events in motion, function to expose the workings of ideology, that is value systems which work to the advantage of a class or classes in a dominant hegemonic position. It is presented as expedient for those in power to mask the convenience of these value systems for themselves by imposing a vision of society in which logical and ineluctable truths prevail, where the social order is reasonable, where individuals can succeed, where the machinations of the powerful and the economic base of social relationships is hidden.

Disruptions indicate that the films' agenda is to reveal that the 'reasonable' order of society, eternal values and truths are, in fact, those of the powerful.

Disorder and disruption can also be signalled visually and stylistically. In this chapter we will consider the construction of narrative space in the films.

Rosi is claimed to be a realist director and we have already



examined his use of the codes and conventions of realism to establish connections between diegetic and extra-diegetic events and to assert narrative authority. Our textual analysis has indicated that there are also other codes at work in the texts.

We suggest that these codes are those associated with melodrama and melodrama in the sense of heightened and hyperbolic drama where personal issues are made to stand for social uncertainty and for the capacity to resolve some of the conflicts of the fraught world of the modern, post-sacred period. Peter Brooks' work on melodrama emphasizes the force of the anxieties generated by the collapse of moral certainties which are dramatized as spectacular enactments of conflict between opposing forces. Brooks contention that melodrama comes into being "in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been violently thrown into question, yet where the promulgation of truth and ethics, their instauration as a way of life, is of immediate, daily, political concern"<sup>1</sup> offers an immediate insight into the usefulness of this form for a mainstream cinema which seeks to engage with political reality, especially that of Italy in the second half of the twentieth century. Brooks describes the narrator figure of melodrama as "pressuring the surface of reality in order to make it yield the full, true terms of his story"<sup>2</sup>, which both accords with the display of doubts and the use of the investigative form in Rosi's film, and with the structuring of his *mise en scène* to reveal hidden meanings. Rosi says that he is interested in the potential of certain kinds of spaces and volumes to express:-

"una dimensione un po' metafisica. ... i luoghi sono scelti per cercare di interpretare la realtà con una leggera dilatazione rispetto alla realtà quotidiana. ... E realistica, ma allo stesso tempo è di una realtà un po' allucinata."

This manipulation of the visual world in a mise en scène whose elements are made noticeable is a constant feature of Rosi's cinema. The mise en scène itself becomes a signifying element where meanings are articulated. Far from Rosi's films after 1976 (with the addition of earlier films such as C'era una volta and Il momento della verità) being 'less political' than his earlier ones, use of the melodramatic mode can explain the differences in terms of a shift from a search for causal explanations to historical events to a dramatization of discontent with the present which takes the form of excavation of the past. Marcia Landy characterizes this excavation of the past as a search for secrets, which will not only enable a context to be set, but will also provide "a means of regarding the past affectively in relation to the present"<sup>4</sup>. The secrets are therefore of a different order, moving from the public to a private sphere, but the techniques which Landy suggests that melodrama commonly uses to uncover them - flashbacks, voice-over narration, diaries, portraits, photographs, newsreels, music, monuments and architectural images - are very evident in these films. As we have already suggested, the drive towards the establishment of a context represents a forceful assertion of time, of history, of complexity working against the tendency, particularly in recent mass culture, to render everything as present and without roots.

Writing about Rosi, whilst occasionally mentioning the

presence of nostalgia and emotion, does not examine his work from the point of view of its use of the melodramatic. Our contention is that this is a fruitful line of enquiry for several reasons. Firstly, the drive towards communicativeness in the films means that the meanings in the texts are unlikely to be totally and fully expressed through their subjects, themes and dialogues. Secondly, much recent work on melodrama argues that it has to work within the framework of realism (rather than fantasy or the supernatural) because it constantly shifts between the need to symbolize and the need to make references to an actual world. Thirdly, it seems to us that an emotional response is necessary in order that the audience is fully persuaded of the truth uncovered by the investigations.

We will examine the interplay of communicativeness and ambiguity, evocations of symbolic spaces where ritualized action takes place, the use of space to communicate 'third meanings' in the texts, and the role of visual excess, ie., moments of heightened visual beauty.

We will also suggest the creation of space in these films is part of an agenda of signalling authorial intention. Not only can we identify certain consistent spatial paradigms recurring from film to film, but we consider that the spatial cues within the films constitute what Bordwell calls the "intermittently present but highly noticeable external authority through which we gain access" to the coherent fabula world<sup>5</sup>.

### 1. Rosi's working methods

Rosi is a particularly interesting director from the point of



view of the apparent contradiction between the way in which the texts assert their authority as "truth", and Rosi's repeated claims in the secondary text of artistic intervention and control of the construction of a "real" world in his films. On the one hand he states that "Ho girato tutto dal vero, naturalmente", and on the other, "Il realismo per se stesso non significherebbe nulla in un film"<sup>6</sup>.

Rosi's regular set designer, Andrea Crisanti, in fact backs up Rosi's claims to modify the profilmic events when he states that:-

"... Rosi nei suoi film usa cinquanta per cento ambienti reali e cinquanta per cento di ricostruzioni in studio (anche se poi sullo schermo è difficilissimo distinguere gli ambienti costruiti in studio da quelli veri). [...] Naturalmente, con Rosi è tutt'altra cosa. Si usano appartamenti liberi, che vengono modellati secondo le precise esigenze di ogni singola inquadratura. Si abbattano e ricostruiscono pareti, si aprono e si chiudono finestre. Si abbassano i soffitti. ... qualcosa di simile ad una specie di ristrutturazione."

and goes on to describe the modifications to the old tuna factory in Dimenticare Palermo and to the colonial houses in Cronaca di una morte annunciata. The town in the latter films was created in locations in Mompòx and Cartagena in Colombia, with the plaza being completely reconstructed on a larger scale outside Cartagena to allow for greater freedom in the rapid camera movements of the finale<sup>8</sup>. In interviews Rosi will stress the plastic and graphic qualities of the buildings he has found when searching for locations - such as the monumental farmhouses of Lucania for Cristo si è fermato a Eboli<sup>9</sup> - and the tonal qualities of the colours he is seeking. For Salvatore Giuliano, for example, he sought three different tones, one for past events, a documentary tone for

Castelvetro, and a television news quality for the Viterbo trial<sup>10</sup>. From interview to interview it emerges that he seeks a different tone with each film, but that he is constantly drawn to very muted tones, and the presence of a very velvety black<sup>11</sup>. Rosi is very conscious that what he is constructing is a very complex spectacle which must interest and entertain the audience. All the elements of the spectacle must interact:-

"... une salle à l'ONU ou un studio de télévision ont une beauté remarquable. Et on peut trouver dans un couloir l'occasion de donner une émotion esthétique et une dynamique à la tension narrative du film. Or, cette tension narrative est capitale pour moi afin que le spectateur suive ce qui se passe sur l'écran. ... Pour capter l'attention du public et l'intéresser à l'aridité d'une conférence de presse, par exemple, tous les éléments doivent être conjugués: la beauté esthétique d'un lieu, la justesse du jeu des acteurs, la précision du son, les rapports dialectiques des personnages. Ça, c'est le spectacle, et en faisant ce spectacle je peux passer en contrabande des dialogues, des idées que normalement le public pourrait rejeter."<sup>12</sup>

Rosi thus signals a desire to participate in mass culture and indicates the preferred site for ostension of meaning.

Spectacle is foregrounded. He attests elsewhere to a process of starting with a visual conception of a film, which will then be articulated into a scenario through a continuous interaction between research and writing.

The material of the secondary text therefore alerts the reader, and eventual viewer, to the fact that what is seen on the screen has been extensively worked over at the stage of set design and at the stage of cinematography. We will now consider the characteristics of cinematic space in the films under discussion.

## PART 1. Communicative and uncommunicative space

### The creation of cinematic space

In classical Hollywood film, the plot or syuzhet is generally dependent on character motivation. Temporal and spatial verisimilitude conform to narrative codes and act to put in place the minimum elements necessary to a plausible evocation of the world of the characters and diegetic events. As David Bordwell has suggested, art cinema developed a range of mise en scène cues for expressing the psychology of a character or "to dramatize private mental processes"<sup>13</sup>. As we have indicated, Rosi is not interested in developing "well-rounded" characters who will drive the narrative forward. Although he does on occasions dramatize mental processes, these shots are subordinated to the investigative function. Through the self-consciousness of the narration, he creates a poetic reality which is a strategy for maintaining a distance between the representation of reality and the referent, a historical reality.

Consideration of cinematic space involves not only examination of the space delineated within the frame but also how things become image, that is, how they are structured to produce and communicate ideas.

### Codes and conventions

Drawing on the work of Panofsky, Barbi et al identify four levels of structuring of cinematic space:-

- the profilmic or referential level, where the choice of objects, persons, actions, backgrounds, contribute as primary actants,
- the iconic level, where, through the agency of the camera



and lighting, things become cinematic image, the sum of mimetic signs which our cultural background enables us to decode,

- the plastic level, where the mise en scène acts on non-mimetic signs and the non-mimetic aspects of mimetic signs in order to generate signification, and

- the diegetic or narrative level, where camera angle and perspective is allied to narrative through the use of voice over, focalization and editing.<sup>14</sup>

The following short transcription from Salvatore Giuliano illustrates these levels at work:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/camera movement</u>
.00		/la ls poor street. Crumbling steps in diagonal uphill from bottom lh to top rh. Maresciallo pa at lh; officer ms leaning on jeep at rh. Hs soldiers in helmets pass in front of lens out of focus.
.05	<u>Maresciallo:</u> Signor Capitano, io questa gente la conosco una per una. Non ha niente a che fare con la banda Giuliano. E tempo perso. <u>Carabiniere officer:</u> Maresciallo. Tutto il paese ha che fare con Giuliano. Lo sa lei quanta gente ha già perso la vita? E poi io non discuto ordini superiori.	Peasant dragged out of door above Maresciallo & off at bottom lh frame. Maresciallo moves towards officer.
.21		Pan left and down as officer turns & walks l to corner of street. Camera continues l to frame him ms backview, arms folded, at rh side. Strongly diagonal composition of street below, houses with balconies on rh side, soldiers in helmets with guns at intervals in middle of street. Prisoners dragged off between soldiers and houses.
.26		

.38        Carabiniere: Dentro, vada    Woman comes onto balcony.  
 .42        via, vada via.

Here we see space being organized at the profilmic level by the choice of the particular streets in Montelepre, particular actors and events. At the iconic level we recognize the helmets as signifying soldiers in battle dress; the crumbling nature of the stepped streets and walls connote poverty. The fact that the camera is placed at the corner of two streets facilitates organization at the plastic level. Because the terrain slopes, the actors are able to move in several planes, and the camera is able to frame a considerable depth of field in two directions. The initial low angle long shot is not obviously diagonal in composition; the final framing of the street, however, emphasizes the natural geometry of perspectival lines by the placing of the soldiers. At the diegetic level, these elements combine to evoke the poverty which is basis of Giuliano's power, and the powerful and oppressive nature of the military machine which has been brought in to eradicate banditry.

The enunciative processes mobilized at these levels enable cultural perspectives to be expressed through the construction of space by means of a series of images resembling a look, or gaze. The gaze can be structured as subjective or as a simple witness of story events.<sup>15</sup> In this particular case, the gaze is initially structured as a simple witness (from a point of maximum communicativeness), and moves to the point of view of the officer, signalled by the continued presence of his body at the right-hand side of the frame.

Even a short, linking sequence, such as that described above,

works hard at all signifying levels. In addition, the timing indicates that the final view of the street is held for a length of time sufficient to enable a 'reading' of the visual information in the light of the dialogue. American editing codes would have resulted in a quicker cut-away.

Comparison of Salvatore Giuliano with Michael Cimino's The Sicilian (1987) shows the difference in weight assigned to these levels. Spatial organization in the latter film is not insistently geometric. The mise en scène of the landscapes and decors functions to amplify signs of character which will motivate the action. For example, Cimino's sequence of the massacre of communists at Portella della Ginestra contains a number of point-of-view and reaction shots which function to concentrate attention on the emotional drama of Giuliano, who has just killed his bride's brother by mistake! The communists sing the Internationale and are predominantly undifferentiated as figures. The comparable sequence in Salvatore Giuliano is firmly contextualized by the voice over situating diegetic events in the 1947 political map of peasant movements for land reform. The three short preceding sequences reiterate the enigma of Giuliano's recruitment of untrained shepherds. The last piece of dialogue offers a solution, which is then illustrated by the Portella della Ginestra sequence. This places the procession from the point of view of an independent witness, rather than that of a character, thus emphasizing the crowd's relationship with the landscape, rather than with the story of the bandit. Framing and camera angle draw on Soviet iconography to suggest an epic quality, which is reinforced by the soundtrack speech



detailing the struggle for basic human rights, the differentiation of physical types among the actors, and the camera movements over the listening crowd. As the first shots are heard, the camera pans up to the mountain from where they originate. From that point the editing is highly organized, moving from initial crowd reaction shots to progressively nearer shots of the first casualties, to progressively longer shots of the crowd's panic, and a series of long shots of the aftermath. Menacing music returns at the end of the sequence as the editing delivers progressively closer shots of the bodies. Moving from the final long shot of the mountain, the camera pans down and left, over the valley, bodies, the flags around the empty mound, and the wounded. Here the sound of the jew's-harp provides an anaphoric reference to the earlier, night attack on the carabinieri post, the coercion of the shepherds, and by extension to Giuliano. The emphasis is on the crowd within the landscape, the epic quality of the people's struggle and the tragedy of the act of massacre. At this point in the narrative, the massacre appears senseless and vicious. Spatial organization gives the lie to construction of Giuliano as Robin Hood figure, robbing to give to the poor.

Taken together, the four sequences bear out Furhammar and Isaksson's contention that the crescendo form is crucial to effective propaganda, that is:-

"...slow build up of involvement towards a final culmination which appears to gather together and reinforce the whole spectrum of emotions previously aroused but not fully exploited."<sup>16</sup>

Besides providing a political context for the massacre of

communists, the three sequences mentioned evoke feelings of foreboding and pity, generated by the music and by the choice of a young and ignorant peasant emblematic of the collective, and by the multiplication of enigmas. At the end of the fourth sequence, the feeling of tragedy is heightened, not only by increasing the editing rate, but also by the rhythmic patterns of framing and, most importantly, by the visual illustration of the manipulation of the ignorant poor to defeat, by force of arms, their equally poor but politically enlightened fellows. The emotion evoked is indignation, directed against Giuliano and whoever controls him, rather than empathy with the emotions of Giuliano.

Thus the same story events produce quite different narratives, not least because the narrative function of space is quite different.

With regard to narrative strategies Roland Barthes suggests three levels which combine to produce meaning - functions, actions and narration:-

"These three levels are bound together according to a mode of progressive integration: a function only has meaning insofar as it occupies a place in the general action of an actant, and this action in turn receives its final meaning from the fact that it is narrated, entrusted to a discourse which possesses its own code."<sup>17</sup>

Barthes distinguishes two classes of functions, distributional and integrational, which he calls functions and indices. The former consist of cardinal functions or nuclei, 'risky moments' of the narrative, which start and end in uncertainty and represent alternative consequences for the story, and catalysers, which expand the narrative.<sup>18</sup> Indices are defined as semantic units which qualify, rather than produce, action

and are divided into indices proper (which refer to a character, emotion, atmosphere, philosophy etc and which imply a deciphering action on the part of the spectator) and informants, "serving to identify, to locate in time and space".

The Portella della Ginestra sequence is a cardinal function which has as its concrete consequence the Viterbo trial of Pisciotta in the film, but which also raises further questions about the activities of Giuliano. The three preceeding sequences are catalysers which expand the enigma. The voice over acts as an informant. The choice of physical types as actors, the choice of camera angles and framings and, most importantly, the evocation of space, are indices proper, offered to the spectator to 'read' the atmosphere, emotion and philosophy of this depiction of the event.

Importantly for this study of cinematic space, Barthes suggests that "functions involve metonymic relata, indices metaphoric relata". We have already seen how Rosi uses metaphorical associations in his exploration of power relations in society and how he uses metonymy as a rhetorical strategy. Films which are dominated by the latter display characteristics of cinematic realism, and those dominated by the former tend towards the dramatic. Both modes operate in varying degrees in the films under discussion. This chapter will consider the organization of the plastic level and the play of indices in the creation of meaning and space.

### Spatial Orientation

A typical pattern in mainstream cinema is for an establishing shot to present the totality of story space, and for



subsequent shots to move, through editing, from the general to the particular, but closely linked to the functioning of a character within the space. Editing functions to orientate spectators with regard to characters or things by showing first one screen direction, then the opposite. This orientation or 'suturing' of spectators into place in the scene has been considered to be a quintessentially cinematic way of concentrating attention on the story world, rather than on the story world as construction.

European cinema, however, has a long tradition of also using camera movement to advance the action and explore space, rather than a heavy reliance on editing.<sup>19</sup> The plan séquence is utilized across genre boundaries and its use is linked to codes and conventions of realism. We have already examined the use of these realist codes of spatial construction in the films under discussion. Whilst Rosi does use what could be described as establishing shots to initiate a sequence, he also regularly starts with a detail and then moves through editing, rack focus or reverse track to reveal the full context. In the first case, his establishing shots are often overcoded. The shot of the New York skyscrapers and Hudson river introducing Valachi's testimony in Lucky Luciano, the low-angle long shot of Judge Riches' palazzo in Cadaveri eccellenti are examples. The former is a cliché and the choice of shots is not fully motivated by the voice-over, and the latter is a building which suggests meanings at a connotative level. In the second case, the audience has to make a constant effort to read the screen to give coherence to the sequence and the story world.

We will now examine how these structures are used within films which, as the earlier cycle do, have the avowed intention of foregrounding, rather than masking ideological value systems at work.

The use of the plan séquence and shot/reverse shot structures

In Salvatore Giuliano, for example, there are very few point-of-view shots until the start of the Viterbo trial. Explorations of space by means of intra-sequence plans séquence, however, permeate the film. At a denotative level they anchor space firmly to definite locations in Sicily - Montelepre, Castelvetro, Palermo. At a connotative level, the framing and mise en scène constantly reiterate oppositions which structure the narrative - power/powerlessness, oppression/oppressor, north/south, development/underdevelopment.

In the early sequences where journalist figures raise enigmas which move the narrative forward, the camera is often placed behind them, sharing their point of view of other witnesses, but the reverse shot showing the faces of the journalists is consistently denied. Not only that but, on one occasion, the carabinieri officer who is the central focus of the press conference then initiates two long takes as he moves out of frame to evade questioning. By this means the text emphasizes the role of representatives of the status quo in manipulating or suppressing information and involves the spectator in the process of dubitation. Physical evasion is being used as a political metaphor for the avoidance of facts and connections<sup>20</sup> The few point-of-view structures that exist fit Branigan's category of open POV structures where a character

looks, but there is no reverse shot to answer the cue<sup>21</sup>. Once the Viterbo trial starts two-thirds of the way through the film, then point-of-view structures increase, as one would expect, with the necessary focalisation on Judge D'Angelo. Here shots consistently follow the 'continuity' POV structure, where the gaze of one character controls reverse shots of a variety of people, lawyers, Gaspare Pisciotta and the bandits in their cage. Only one short scene relies on shot/reverse shot structure, that of the interrogation of the mafia intermediary which reveals the friendly relations between Giuliano, Pisciotta and a policeman. Instead, a range of shots are orchestrated to show the positions of the contending forces and to allow the President of the court to comment and make connections.

The continuity point-of-view structure occurs regularly where there is focalization on a character who looks and investigates. Judge D'Agostino is an example from Le mani sulla città. The facial expressions and body language of the actor, Salvo Randone cue readings of exasperation, disbelief, cynicism and an ironic reception of the testimonies of those in the court. Similar structures occur in Il caso Mattei, where Gian Maria Volonté's expressions organize our hypotheses in relation to Engineer Ferrari's fascist past, to the bankers who were reluctant to make loans to ENI; in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Cronaca di una morte annunciata, where Volonté's cue shots are fundamental to the rhetorical structure of the film<sup>22</sup>; and, as we have seen, in Cadaveri eccellenti where we follow Rogas as he attempts to solve the mystery. The structure is also used in Dimenticare Palermo



when Carmine reaches Sicily. His character allows the insertion of a critical distance following the time-honoured rhetorical strategy of focalizing on a stranger or foreigner's explorations of a world unfamiliar to him but familiar to us. Carmine's expressions as he watches his wife rushing off to photograph picturesque urchins, workers, prostitutes, are of horror, disbelief, distaste, provoking a reading of the South as evil - the demonized South.

### Shot/reverse shot structures as metaphors of conflict

Some scenes appear to fit Hollywood conventions, but on close analysis reveal their working at other levels. For example, the sequence in Cadaveri eccellenti where Rogas and Cusan have lunch on the terrace by the sea starts with a long shot of the terrace, table and characters, moving to two shot/reverse shot patterns as they speak. The sequence functions to develop the idea of a political dimension to the murders and the dialogue imparts a great deal of information - that the left wing supports Rogas for doing an honest job; that the country is in a state of tension and that political corruption exists. An allusion to a shared childhood, fishing, etc reinforces Rogas as 'normal' after the sequences showing the murder of Judge Rasto. The shot/reverse shot structures function as metaphors of conflict and opposition which, in this particular sequence is resolved. The conflict in Cadaveri eccellenti is between Rogas and others in his organization, not between Rogas and Cusan.

The use of a strongly diagonal composition and wide angle lens does, however, heighten the dramaticity of the sequence and underscores the informational nature of the sequence.

Similarly, shot/reverse shot patterns echo dialogue in Lucky Luciano, particularly in the United Nations debate sequences to illustrate visually a conflict between the Drug Enforcement Agency represented by Anslinger, and the Italian government. In Il caso Mattei, as we have seen in a previous chapter, shot/reverse shot structures are used to make visible not only Mattei and the US oilman and their interpreters' literal positions in relation to each other, but also their symbolic opposition to one another.

#### The role of point of view shots in structuring space

Point of view shots, ie., shots following the cue of character gaze, are obviously important in films where focalization occurs around a character who investigates. In the films under discussion, point-of-view shots linked to a character occur much less frequently than shots linked to no character at all. What is important is to show the emotional reaction of the investigator to what he is investigating or, as in the following example from Cadaveri eccellenti, to show the process of investigation.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/movement</u>
.00		/ecu man in cap (ozioso)
.02	<u>Rogas</u> : Come va?	/ms Rogas lh; palm tree middle; hs ozioso bottom r
.03	<u>Ozioso</u> : Non va.	/ecu ozioso's eyes
.06	<u>Rogas</u> : Che cosa non va?	/hs Rogas + palmtree
.07	<u>Ozioso</u> : Tutto.	/ecu ozioso
.09	<u>Rogas</u> : E prima?	/hs Rogas, looks quizzical
.13	<u>Ozioso</u> : Prima di che?	/ecu ozioso
.15	<u>Rogas</u> : Prima dico andava?	/hs Rogas, + palm, quizzical
.18	<u>Ozioso</u> : No.	/ecu ozioso
.21	<u>Rogas</u> : Allora?	/cu Rogas
.22	<u>Ozioso</u> : Allora eccoci qua.	/ecu Ozioso, drops eyes, looks up
.31	faint banging sound	/cu Rogas, looks up l
.32	Sound of shutters	/la ms Rogas, looks l & behind, background v light
.36		/hs rs Rogas, looks up & l,

		church with black figures on steps. Turns r
.42		/cu Ozioso, eyes move r
.44	Sound of hooves	/wa els square very light, palm & church lh, memorial with statue, Rogas & Ozioso placed towards rh cast long shadows
		Rogas moves to rh of frame to sit beside Ozioso
.58	<u>Rogas</u> : Che cosa ne pensi di questi ammazzamenti di giudici? Fu Varga che ti condannò?	/ms Ozioso lh, Rogas rh. Rogas turns to Ozioso
1.16	<u>vo Ozioso</u> : Era il pubblico Ministro. Voleva darmi 30 anni. Gli spiaceva disse che non c'era più la pena di morte.	Ozioso shrugs
	<u>vo Rogas</u> : E fu il Presidente Sanza nel tribunale..	/cu bw photo of Varga, finger points l, pan l as photo picked up, pan down
	<u>vo Ozioso</u> : Ma il Giudice Sanza mi faceva lo sconto. Invece facevo 27 anni, ma non fosse solo lui	to photo of Sanza, Ozioso rh hs
	<u>vo Rogas</u> : Lo so. Ce l'hai anche il Giudice Rasto.. e Rasto è ancora vivo	pan right to adjacent photo of Sanza, pan r to another photo of Sanza with glasses pan l to photo of Rasto hs
1.41	noise of jackdaws	/ms Rogas backview rh, Ozioso lh looking at him. Ozioso sits up, camera moves with him to cu
	<u>Ozioso</u> : Che vuole di me? Hanno provato che ero innocente.	
	<u>Rogas</u> : Appunto. Eri innocente e sei stato 4 anni in carcere ingiustamente.	Rogas nods
	<u>Ozioso</u> : E ho fatto 52 di vita ingiustamente. (jackdaws) I quattro che ho passato in carcere non mi pesano. Il carcere è sicuro.	Pull back to ms. Ozioso looks at Rogas
	Bell rings	
2.26	bell	Ozioso gets up & leaves frame r. Rogas looks up & gaze follows r
		/pa Ozioso leaning on memorial lh, Rogas sitting up rh. 2 figures in background sit watching on church steps. Rogas stands & walks towards camera, stops
2.38	noise of bell & jackdaws	/els piazza, palm lh, memorial centre, church behind. Rogas walks to church.
2.52		



Here, although the shot/reverse shot structure follows dialogue at the start of the sequence, and although the long shots of the square follow cue shots of Rogas and the ozioso looking, or Rogas moving, we see that the soundtrack and mise en scène is tightly organized at the iconic and plastic levels to express other ideas. Linda Coremans has shown how this sequence expresses cinematically by the use of codes of spatial structure the isotopie, "southern", which informs Sciascia's book (and all of Rosi's films).<sup>21</sup> Thus the over-exposed lighting, the palm tree, architecture and shadows connote heat and southernness; the immobility of the camera, figures in black, the presence of the church, bells, priest, donkey connote a static, underdeveloped society in which the church plays a part.

This sequence occurs early in Rogas' investigation and it is interesting to note that the use of close-ups and extreme close-ups, and the delay of a long shot to situate the figures in space, conform to codes of suspense proper to the investigative format or thriller.

Other interesting features of this sequence are the use of the wide angle lens for the long shots and the use of photographs. Rosi has described his work at the profilmic level to modify the square in a small Sicilian village:-

"...era bellissima perchè fatta veramente di puri spazi, di puri volumi, e come sono gli spazi, i volumi, che si possono incontrare nei quadri metafisici di De Chirico.

...Quell'atmosfera ... rarefatta. Quella piazza per esempio, io ho modificato un po' la scenografia... perchè ... intorno a quel monumentino c'era un giardinetto con un piccolo cancello che lo circondava. Però questo disturbava l'idea che io avevo di questo spazio, di questi volumi e di questa pulizia. Allora, io ho chiesto al mio scenografo di

coprire questo giardinetto. ... Allora ho fatto coprire con una costruzione sulla quale poi ho fatto mettere delle pietre ed ho fatto togliere il cancello. Allora questo monumento è diventato molto più essenziale e pulita nella piazza, e la piazza ha acquistato una sua unità dal punto di visto scenografico e architettonico."<sup>21</sup>

Coremans has also noted this drawing attention to the indexicality of the cinematic sign.

The use of photographs in this sequence - photographs which are not present in the square - is also one of the constant indications of enunciation in the text.

The canonic shot/reverse shot structure is therefore either not observed in these films, or is subordinated to dialogue or to marks of enunciation which have an opposite function to the masking of ideology.

#### The use of sound

Sound is crucial to the modelling of space, varying in intensity and timbre in order to indicate total volume and relative position of sound sources (eg characters) within it. In the sequence above, the noise of the bells, besides functioning to echo the presence of the church, also serve by their timbre to indicate atmosphere and volume. The sound of jackdaws occurs in almost all of the films and, by its presence connotes spaces not dominated by city noise, ie., the rural. According to Burch,

"off-screen sound... always brings off-screen space into play, regardless of whether or not it occurs in conjunction with any the the spatial modalities thus far described. When sound alone is involved, either as background noise, music, or an off-screen voice coming from an undetermined direction, it brings the surrounding space as a whole into play. Even when there is no indication of the direction a sound is coming from (and today, of course, stereophonic sound, on a strictly auditory level, provides some indication of direction), we are able to tell

approximately how far away it is..."<sup>25</sup>

In the particular case of the plan séquence, Bordwell has suggested that "sound guides the viewer to look at one speaker in one portion of the frame, then shift his/her attention to another spot"<sup>26</sup> since the spectator is not cued by cuts. The plan séquence which follows the optical point of view of a character is unusual to the extent of being insistent.

Finally, whereas the framing and camera movement may work to conceal or delay a communicative image, sound is by its nature instantaneously received in its entirety. Even when the spectator is not conscious of it, sound works to enhance perception of the visual image. The opening sequence of Cadaveri eccellenti, for example, contains the funeral dirge faintly on the soundtrack, which enhances connotations of death and corruption conveyed by the display of mummified corpses. This dirge occurs as a leitmotiv throughout the film. Kaes suggests that the use of sound to intimate and connote connections allows public and political discourse to enter the narrative space, even if the protagonists are presented as unpolitical and oblivious to political discourse.<sup>27</sup> Prime examples occur in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli in an early sequence where the record of De Pineda's speech to the crowd upon landing in America both provides the occasion for the meeting with the carpenter, a nucleus in the narrative, and an ironic contrast between the grandiose language of fascist rhetoric and the reality of the life of a returned emigrant in a poor, rural area. Later in the film, the magnificent tracking shot over the countryside outside Gagliano, shot in colour tones of vivid green and yellow, is



accompanied by Mussolini's speech announcing the taking of Addis Ababa on the soundtrack. The colour tones, movement and framing express the emotion of freedom from confinement but the juxtaposition of the speech over images of peasants toiling in the fields permits a highly ironic reading of fascist ideology.

Recently a common aural strategy has been to repeat the extra-diegetic theme music intra-diegetically. Thus the rather sad, slow and lyrical theme music of Cristo si è fermato a Eboli is repeated in the clarinet playing of the tax collector; the theme music of Tre fratelli is repeated in the organ music Rocco plays in his local church; the voice of Caruso in Dimenticare Palermo is used extra- and intra-diegetically. The repetition reinforces a particular atmosphere and mood which informs the investigation of the reality of southern Italy. More than this, since it is an unusual strategy in mainstream cinema, it breaks the conventional barrier between the diegetic world and its organization on film. By bringing the music into the realm of the reality of the diegetic world, the impression is given that the film itself is being brought out of the fictional mode into contemporary reality. It foregrounds the instance of enunciation and signals the presence of the "implied author" Rosi in the text.

### Sound disruptions

Not only are disruptions signalled aurally in the texts but sound functions continually to cue ambiguities or aural enigmas. Sound bridges - whereby sound is extra-diegetic at the end of one sequence, becoming diegetic at the beginning of the succeeding sequence - are fairly common stylistic devices

from the late sixties onwards. In narrative terms they function as sound 'hooks', creating aural enigmas which, quickly resolved, move the narrative forward. Branigan links the manipulation of sound to the normal hypothesis reading activity of the viewer.<sup>28</sup> Sound provokes a search for its origin, its reference point in space. As such it is useful to a cinema working against formal transparency and unproblematic ideological relations. In addition, Bordwell identifies sound bridges as an "authorial trick", a foregrounded temporal device which is a sign of self-conscious narration.<sup>29</sup> They recur so frequently in the films under discussion as to constitute an element of Rosi's style and to signal authorial presence.

Aural disruptions are constantly used. They include a full range of loud crashes, bangs, hoots, whistles which draw attention to themselves immediately and which may or may not be identified by hypothesizing their contextual logic.

Music often performs this function - the insistent chords of Piero Piccioni's musical scores, or the urgent, strident wail of folksongs of the extreme south - drawing attention to dramatic moments.

Another regular device is for extra-diegetic heartbeats to accompany action, evoking the emotion of anxiety by their very insistence. It is often used in association with fragmented or strange images, a combination of visual and aural asyndeton and coded for generic ambiguity. Examples occur early in Il caso Mattei when Signora Mattei hears of Mattei's death, at the death of Lt Ottolenghi in Uomini contro, and in Tre fratelli over Rocco's initial rat dream, and Raffaele's later

nightmare of assassination.

The use of sound in all its aspects is therefore very carefully orchestrated, both to "sculpt visual space"<sup>30</sup> and, as we shall discuss in the next section, to jar the spectator into having to scan the image to locate the sound source and its meaning.

#### Uncommunicative space or the alienation effect

Brecht's theorization of the alienation effect as a strategy to ensure an alert, critical audience in the theatre was rapidly taken up by left-wing playwrights in the 1950s, and has been extensively used in the cinema. The use of the tableau, media mixed with performance, the quoting actor, shock effects, have been absorbed into the conventions of art cinema, and have subsequently crossed into the mainstream. The films under discussion use the potential for disruption of Brechtian conventions in order to cue alternative readings of images and events.

#### Editing patterns

We have earlier analyzed some typical patterns whereby cinematic space is created. A very common treatment of space in Rosi's films is to disrupt continuity editing so that there is no smooth movement from the general to the particular. Many sequences move from a detail through editing or rack focus to a display of the wider context; for example, from close ups of soldiers inside a jeep viewed from the bonnet to an extreme long shot situating them on a deserted road in a valley within range of a gun in Salvatore Giuliano; a close up of a hand holding a photograph or manipulating an identikit picture to a medium shot or long shot situating the figure in



relationship to others and/or within a space.

### Asymmetry

Another common strategy is to use asymmetrical or other, stressed, framing - for example, the large, dark area of the back of Mattei's chair as his wife enters the room to ask what is in the letter he holds; dark areas under staircases and at the angle of corridors as in Judge Rasto's house in Cadaveri eccellenti; the darkness surrounding the figures of Nottola and Maglione as they quarrel in Nottola's office in Le mani sulla città, accentuated by the brightness of the central lamp; huge dark areas of streets, with figures only intermittently lit and always off-centre as Pisciotta guides the police to the house of De Maria. Distorsion metaphors are common in film.<sup>31</sup> At a metaphoric level these incomplete viewpoints suggest the existence of things hidden, areas of ignorance - the visual equivalent of the doubt.<sup>32</sup>

These strategies can be attributed to the hermeneutic codes of the thriller and investigative cinematic genres where the uncommunicative nature of the space depicted helps generate enigmas and ambiguities within the texts.

### The alienation effect

The presence of the signifying process is also foregrounded on frequent occasions in the films. Strategies include:-

- asynchronous sound (see sound bridges above)
- droplets of water on the camera lens (during the boat journey to the island prison in Cadaveri eccellenti; bodies collected in the aftermath of the crash in Il caso Mattei,
- Over-exposure (the view from the train, the tearing up of evidence by the Police chief in Cadaveri eccellenti),

- shooting against the light (the end of the Hotel de Paris sequence in Il caso Mattei, the Pompei sequence in Lucky Luciano)<sup>33</sup>.

In our previous discussion of the use of journalist figures we have identified some of these as strategies which mimic the codes and conventions of actuality reportage. However, as Keir Elam suggests, this foregrounding of cinematic language is a metalinguistic function which has the effect of distancing the spectator from the text, facilitating critical readings of narrative events.<sup>34</sup>

## PART 2. The Creation of Social Space

We have seen how the texts both use and subvert mainstream codes of spatial construction. We will now consider the use of these expressive codes in Rosi's cinema.

Rosi's films are marked by a particular display, or exhibition, of their expressive material which results in highly communicative images of the spaces in which narrative events take place.

These displays mark nodal points where connections are made, where the spectator is involved in deciphering social relationships.

### The urban social space

The urban environment in particular provides settings in which power relationships are enacted. The funeral of Judge Sanza, for example (in Cadaveri eccellenti) fills the social space of the public square with the elaborate hearse and horses, and the cortege of women veiled in black and a full panoply of local dignitaries. The camera pulls back to show Rogas, backview, close-up, watching the procession through the bars

of railings on which are Judge Sanza's funeral notices. the camera rack focusses to 'read' the notice - "Giudice Sanza... vissuto senza nozze per meglio dedicare tutta la vita alla sua città natale che in trent'anni dell'amministrazione della giustizia lui aveva visto crescere e moltiplicare". The sequence ends with a medium reverse shot of Rogas watching behind bars - a powerful and ambiguous shot which has resonances in relation to Il contesto.<sup>35</sup> The filling of public space provides a metaphor of political domination by a certain class. Funereal blacks and grey-greens predominate, as generally in this film, amplifying the metaphoric association of death and corruption with the ruling classes.<sup>36</sup> The funeral notice provides a narrative hook which is expanded in the next sequence where the final gesture of the peasant likens Sanza to the city, unnatural and evil. The funeral notice thus gains a retrospective resonance, and irony, with its suggestion of complicity in building speculation. The proximity of these three visual elements (the procession, notice, Rogas behind bars) are also indicative of other social realities - the ability of the powerful to impose their own version of history, and their ability to constrain persons attempting to discover a reality other than that officially sanctioned.

Angela Dalle Vacche suggests that the staging of spectacles by fascist regimes illustrates Gramsci's definition of hegemony as a mixture of force and consent, and that "the exploitation of consent as a disguise of coercion occurs in daily Italian life and in cinematic spectacles meant to foster a condition of passivity in the viewers".<sup>37</sup> The mise en scène of these



grandiose funerals illustrates how "la classe dominante se ménage le consensus des groupes sociaux qui lui sont proches et alliés"<sup>38</sup>. Crowd scenes in the municipal Council chamber in Le mani sulla città illustrate the manipulation of the democratic process of consent by the corrupt Nottola and his right wing allies. Sequences in the municipal archives, in the District Surveyor's office, and finally in the ante-room to the Council Chamber, illustrate the suppression of information for the purpose of corruptly obtaining advantages for those in power. If we take the generation of the emotion of indignation as a sign of the efficacy of a particular strategy of persuasion in the narrative, then the sequence where Maglione and Nottola are reconciled in the ante-room is indicative of awareness of coercion disguised as consent. Nottola has switched political allegiance, thus facilitating his nomination as Public Assessor of building contracts. His aim, outlined in the very first sequence, of making money from land speculation will easily be achieved.

This transcription from Cadaveri eccellenti contains the following, succinct enactment of power relations:-

<u>Time</u>	<u>Soundtrack</u>	<u>Cuts/frame/camera movement</u>
.00	... (faint) questo pazzo furioso	/els diagonal corridor in enormous baroque building, enormous chandeliers; small figures appear at door at top rh & walk towards bottom lh.
.04	Soltanto un pazzo furioso può andar in giro ammazzando giudici.	/ls same. Group of men walk forward to pa
.09		/els int huge baroque building, enormous arched windows at top of frame over long staircase. Figures appear v small at top of stairs, slight pan l as move down & l. Minister stops half way &
	<u>Minister:</u> Se lo ricordi bene. E lei il Capo del-	

	la Polizia.	faces police chief below him
.13	Non si faccia illusioni.	/ms Police Chief backview,
	Sarà lei	looks up r to Minister
.26	il primo di saltare.	/ms Police Chief looks up
		facing Minister who turns,
		pan l as exits l
.27		/ls group cross landing and
		go down next flight on lh
		side. Reframe to include
		huge wall & arched windows.
.34	<u>Capo polizia</u> : Io sono il	/Ext ls, v light. Diagonal
	Capo della Polizia.	runway from bottom lh to top
		rh. Police Chief & Rogas top
		centre, soldier hs rh side,
		tower lh side, ls figures of
		armed soldiers emphasize
		vanishing point
.38	Però, se devo saltare io,	/ms Police Chief from Rogas'
A	salta prima lei - e alme-	pov, chief gesticulates
	no cercate di non far ve-	
	nire fuori tutti queste	
	porcherie su giudici	
	morti	
.45	Che cos'è?	/rs ms Police Chief backview
B		facing Rogas, watery green
		heat haze behind them. Rogas
		impassive, reaches in pocket
.49	<u>Rogas</u> : L'ho trovato nel	/ms Rogas as A, hands paper
A	cassetto	to Police Chief
.53	del valoroso Presidente	/rs ms Rogas as B, plane
B	Calamo. Aveva centinaia	takes off in background
	di milioni in banca.	
1.02		/nearer ms Police Chief,
		angry face, tears paper up
1.04		/hs Rogas, puzzled expression
1.08	buzz of planes	/ms paper, pan r as blows &
		flutters against light rocky
		landscape
1.13		/hs Rogas looks back to
1.15		Police Chief.

This sequence makes the exercise of power visual, and at the same time makes a statement about the power of the institution of public safety. It is symbolic that the threats are uttered as the characters go down the stairs and that the Police Chief repeats the threat to Rogas outside the institutional building. In this way the mise en scène separates the figure of Rogas from direct identification with the powerful; he is outside their cabales. The end of the sequence also makes

visual the effects of hierarchical social structures and the solidarity of the powerful. The reputation of Judge Calamo will be protected by the destruction of evidence. The repetition of the direction of the orthogonals is a visual 'rhyme' linking the spaces.

Rural towns are typified by a symbolic mise en scène which stresses the narrow, winding nature of the streets, the role of public spaces in cementing group solidarity and leaves ambiguous whether the fact that any individual action can be seen and commented on by the collective, is a good or bad thing. In Eboli, the visit of the carabinieri to the 'bella mafiosa' is known to all and is watched by Levi. Again, it allows a visual representation of the closeness of security forces and mafia, and the operation of omertà. Niccola's visit to his old girlfriend in Tre fratelli is prefaced by a long shot showing him quickly looking round at the surrounding walls and windows before he gains entrance. Shots of the central plaza in Cronaca di una morte annunciata are set up so that the communality of life and the coercive effect of surveillance is made visible.

### The Baroque

It is interesting that the use of diagonal compositions (which will be explored more fully in Part 4) has been associated with both baroque and with constructivist and modernist art. These movements can be seen to be a reaction against previous artistic norms of harmony and balance between emotion and reason, imagination and reality and to express a certain spiritual disquiet. Baroque art in particular has been seen as a reaction to Renaissance ideals of harmony and to the



austerity of the Counter Reformation.<sup>39</sup> The containment of crowds becomes a metaphor of ideological control. The turbulent movement of forms, their richness and abundance were harnessed to the stirring of emotions and aimed at increasing awareness. Baroque art aimed to create atmosphere by using images "more forceful and arresting than reality itself"<sup>40</sup>, mainly associated with the manipulation of space. These aims correspond closely with those of the Russian Formalist artists of the beginning of the twentieth century who advocated a work of art's drawing attention to itself. Baroque art employs asymmetry to help resolve the contradictions of realistic content with richness and excess of form. Huyghe also mentions<sup>41</sup> the Baroque penchant for pageants and festivities and that these were conceived architecturally as the interaction of crowds and buildings around public space. In this connection it is interesting to note Maravall's contention that the buildings and social spaces of the baroque period were organized in response to the need for the containment of an unreliable populace.<sup>42</sup> Crowds in these films are contained within social spaces - the women of Montelepre rush through the streets to rescue their menfolk in Salvatore Giuliano, but are easily contained by the military on the edge of the square; demonstrators in Cadaveri eccellenti are observed and controlled; the women factory workers in Carmen are channelled through the streets. The size and noise of the crowds indicates their potential for violence and disruption. By its containment the mass movement in Cadaveri eccellenti is made visible, but it is bounded by buildings and controlled not only by the forces of the State,

but also by the compromesso storico enacted within PCI headquarters; crowds of Italian girls in Lucky Luciano are channelled into an enormous baroque hall for the use of the victorious US soldiery - the white bread and butter which the girls eat displays the economic basis of the power exercised over them, their hunger; the crowds waiting for the Bishop's riverboat in Cronaca di una morte annunciata indicate the power of the Roman Catholic church in Latin American society, and the repressive power of coercive social mores is amplified as the townspeople rush towards the square to witness and approve the murder of Santiago Nasar for an act which disrupts the power relationships of a static society (taking the virginity of Angela Vicario). In a more pessimistic vein, the crowds of Dimenticare Palermo are contained within streets and squares at the behest of the mafia 'Man of Power'.

The Baroque therefore comes to represent the tension between power and order, and revolt and disorder. Internal conflicts are externalized. According to Bryan Turner, the tension marks a moment of historical change when a very hierarchical status system is challenged by the pressure of bourgeois individualism.<sup>43</sup> At this stage the pressure towards a new social stratification is unable to be contained and results in an excessive display by the threatened power system.

Rosi is particularly interested in architecture and states the Baroque to be a deliberate choice:-

"Ho costruito la scenografia di Cadaveri eccellenti attraverso molte città italiane; ho scelto Napoli, Palermo, Lecce, Siculiana vicino a Palermo, Agrigento - principalmente perché in questi posti ho trovato alcuni elementi scenografici che appartenevano tutti allo stesso clima, cioè all'architettura barocca della fine del seicento dei

primi del settecento, con la dilatazione delle proporzioni che mi serviva per dilatare la realtà. Avevo bisogno di una realtà metafisica per quel film, non individuabile fisicamente in una città precisa. Dovevo parlare dell'Italia, ma dovevo parlare di un'Italia che corrispondeva ad una interpretazione un po' metafisica della realtà."<sup>44</sup>

The ornate and grandiose structures of Baroque architecture therefore conform to Bonta's definition of an intentional index, in that they were and are deliberately used to communicate, but may not be recognized as such by the viewer.<sup>45</sup> In effect, what is being made visual is the tension between two versions of politics or ideology.

#### The media as socially constructed space

The use of the media in Rosi's films is extremely interesting. As we have shown, images of press conferences and crowds of journalists recur from film to film. At the narrative level they permit the transmission of information in a plausible manner. At the metaphoric level, they suggest the manipulation of information, of versions of history, by those in power.

Linda Coremans has shown how Rogas' glances in the sequence in Groba's laboratory in Cadaveri eccellenti are used to cue attention to television screens which expand diegetic space to include Amar's office, the exterior and interior of the Palazzo della Giustizia, and the sphere of operation of the revolutionary, Galano.<sup>46</sup> Whilst expanding narrative space, the sequence in the laboratory of the Chief of the Political Section, Groba, also provides a vivid metaphor of social control. Television screens are also used in Il caso Mattei to illustrate the construction of an interpretation of Mattei's life which does not disrupt the status quo.



Jameson finds the display of media technology and the processes of production in postmodern narratives fascinating because they provide a "privileged representational shorthand for grasping the network of power and control" which would otherwise be difficult to perceive.<sup>47</sup>

The use of still photographs inevitably slows down the narrative as their content is offered for interpretation. Further levels of disruption occur when still photographs suddenly become black and white moving images, as in photographs of the corpse of the homosexual suspect's young lover in Cadaveri eccellenti. In Uomini contro they are used to indicate the domestic sphere of General Leone, and in Tre fratelli to economically evoke a terrorist murder, which will motivate Raffaele's dream. In Brechtian terms, they disrupt by their colour, and by the brake on action of the act of interpretation. As such they pertain to the films' metadiscourse and indicate the presence of the enunciating subject.

#### The rural as social space

Images and evocations of the south recur in all of the films. High-contrast images of southern architecture, performance codes indicating an expansive and emotional expressiveness typical of the Mediterranean, hill towns, donkeys, bare and infertile countryside signify the poverty and exploitation of the Mezzogiorno. In the earlier cycle, the south becomes symbolic of "Africa a casa", third world underdevelopment and the presence of capitalist economic relationships of exploitation. The rural thus functions as a challenge to dominant ideology which stresses the ability of the individual

to achieve better conditions of existence.

In the later cycle, the values of an archaic civilization are gently evaluated and validated and the role of political structures in the maintenance of that poverty explored. The films do not, however, escape nostalgia. In fact, both Cristo si è fermato a Eboli and Tre fratelli contain sequences which completely brake the action, where the spectator is given access into a strange world. The sequences in which Donato Giuranna tells his grand-daughter about the stars and the waking of the animals in the former film, and where Giulia tells Levi about the spells whilst he is painting her and Carmelo in the latter film are examples. Rural social relationships can be exploitative, hierarchical and extremely conservative. These facts are implicit in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli onwards so far as the social position of women is concerned, but not successfully made explicit.

Rosi became very defensive of the underlying premise of Cronaca di una morte annunciata, that female virginity upon marriage was a signifier of the unsullied honour of the family. The film shows the transmission of the ideology of female containment within the family, but ultimately does not offer enough to unmask it. Indeed, the late sequence where an improbably grey Rupert Everett returns after 27 years to claim his bride jars considerably. Seeing her letters from her balcony, Angela Vicario is drawn out of her house into the public domain of the open ground by the river. The warm colour tones and picturesque trees give the mise en scène an oneiric quality. She appears submissive, sinking down to clasp his knees as she is reunited with her husband. Here it

is only the codes of melodrama, that is, those of mise en scène and gesture, which point towards meaning.

The space of economic and gender power

In Chapter 3, and in the earlier sections of this Chapter, we have seen that the spaces constructed are in the main those where male power is exercised and male conflict takes place. Mostly these are institutional spaces and men are seen exercising their roles in the public sphere, with the concomitant problems of power and domination, various forms of violence. By Tre fratelli the problem of the separation of public from private sphere is externalized and expresses itself very vividly in the dreams of the three brothers. Raffaele, the public man, dreams not only of his own assassination, but also of the effect it will have on his wife and son. At the culmination of Niccola's dream, sensual mobile camerawork is used to encircle the couple as they are united in the grey-blue tones of the bedroom. Rocco's dream attempts to merge the personal and the public in a theatrical (even kitsch) space. Children sweep away rubbish and drugs and join cheering with Rocco against brightly coloured backdrops of skyscrapers and Vesuvius.

In Dimenticare Palermo the modes of the exercise of sexual power is alluded to visually (in the female 'bait' to Carmine, which again is offered in the public space of the Palermo square, and by the seaside) and in the dialogue concerning Caruso and unfaithfulness, but is not contested. Indeed Carrie, although depicted as an independent modern woman with what appears on the surface to be a powerful job, that of Editor of a magazine, is ultimately shown to be powerless.



The mise en scène of her office is dark in tone. The main architectural feature, which imposes itself on the eye by virtue of a contrast, is a curved wall of luminous glass whose shape blocks the lines of the orthogonals of the table, arresting movement out of the frame and throwing attention back into the room. On the table is evidence, which her dialogue describes, of stories which have been blocked because conflicting with the economic interests of some of the magazine's shareholders, companies whose ownership can be traced back to mafia interests.

The mise en scène of these sequences evokes personal experience and personal relations but with a heightened emotionality which displays the tensions in these personal relations.

#### Space as the site of ritual social action

We have already seen how male conflict is represented visually in the mise en scène of the films. Actors are placed to represent symbolic oppositions within space. At times the choice of space gains significance from its institutional context. The stony battlefields of the Carso are the site of class, as well as national, conflict. Court rooms, council chambers and, pre-eminently, bull rings are sites of ritualized social conflict.

In his work on the spaghetti western, Eduardo Gearda suggests that ritualized conflict, the duel, constitutes a sort of "situação-limite" or boundary situation allowing for the entry of the symbolic into the social.<sup>48</sup> These films, however, displace the focus from the protagonists to the social construction of the ritual by working against identification

with a psychologically plausible central character, and by stressing the pictural qualities of the site of conflict.

Depth of field is one method of making cultural context visible as it allows the spectator to perceive interactions between characters.

Cinematic space is also important in the depiction of ritualized social action which is not conflictual in nature. Social gatherings where cultural solidarity is expressed through social rituals are also common, for example, wedding scenes, parties and meals. Given the importance of food and its preparation in Italian society, it is not surprising that the gathering together of a group to eat recurs throughout the films. Jean Gili suggests that:-

"Le banquet a dans les films de Rosi le sens d'un moment privilégié, un moment où se rencontrent des hommes de pouvoir qui abandonnent leur aspect inquiétant pour devenir de simples citoyens... c'est le moment d'amitié entre les membres d'une sorte de fraternité.

... Ainsi, le grand repas est toujours un moment-clef du film..."<sup>49</sup>

One of the most effective uses of depth of field is the asymmetrical camera placing onto rectangular tables. Breaking bread together with others has, of course, many levels of ritual significance - the signification of agreement, the creation of community, the marking of rituals in human life such as marriage and death. Rosi has exploited to the full both the opportunity of such compositions to establish a space in which the narrative is enacted and to cue the spectator to a more symbolic reading.

La sfida contains three such compositions. Two of these sequences show the camorra gathered together for a meal. In

the first, Vito meets the camorra leader, Don Salvatore Aiello, for the first time and challenges his right to control of fruit sales in that part of the countryside; in the second Vito challenges Aiello's decision to hold back tomatoes from the Neapolitan markets for a week. The placing of the camera allows establishing long shots, parallel editing in medium shot and close up of reactions and to perceive tensions between the protagonists when both are in frame. These sequences both suggest the configurations of this all-male community and its criminal intent. The ritual aspect is stressed twice. The meal itself is a cardinal function in the narrative; the narrative catalyser function giving the reason for the first gathering is the presence of a religious festival in the village (this is itself cued three times; as a dialogue hook in the previous sequence, by the firework noise which ends the sequence, and by the procession) and it is significant that the church and its rituals are linked sequentially to the rituals of illegal power! The second stress comes from the ritual nature of the confrontation of Vito and Aiello - the delivery of the challenge, its refusal, the reiteration of the challenge, its acceptance and the presence of witnesses.

In the second the challenge is again conducted ritually in front of witnesses at a meal. Vito loses his argument and the subsequent ritual insult concerns his approaching wedding.

In the third, camera placing along tables at Vito's wedding feast cues the presence of Don Califano (with whom Vito is doing business on his own account) and their subsequent discussion allows a certain ironic contrast between the



tension of the sordid business deal and what is supposed to be a happy occasion. All three occasions allow the spectator to make hypotheses about probable outcomes on the basis of all the dialogue and visual information supplied, whilst at the same time coming to conclusions about the nature of the camorra, ie., making political conclusions. This kind of social gathering is a recurrent motif.

It is interesting that these narrative devices are also used in Lucky Luciano. Here there are two contrasting uses of composition around tables - those of Luciano and his mafia associates, where the composition allows the eye to linger on the physical types (middle-aged, male, latin, generally overweight), and those conversations between the investigator Charles Siragusa and his boss in the Narcotics Squad, M J Anslinger. The latter take place in almost empty boardrooms of official buildings, including the United Nations. These contrasts emphasize the isolation and lack of resources given to the official enemies of such as Luciano.

It is significant that the participants in these meal sequences are almost exclusively male.

The use of the wide angle lens, slow motion followed by fast cutting to the rhythm of the country dance, and the extreme clarity of light in the long shot of the rain storm during the wedding sequence in Tre fratelli evoke a magical atmosphere. Not only does it contrast to the sad tone of the rest of the film, but the very throng of the gathering invites a comparison with the emptiness of the present-day rural landscape, making the political reality of emigration visual.

### PART 3. The architectural shot: space as sign

A feature of all these films is the striking visual beauty of representations of the interiors and exteriors of buildings. The framing of the buildings and the lens used emphasize their monumentality, volumes and architectural planes. They are not merely situation shots but cinematic signs which say things about the institutions they represent or serve.

Thus, in Cadaveri eccellenti, the baroque church which contains the mummified corpses (the Capuchin Monastery in Palermo) carries the presence of death into the sunlit street where Varga is shot; the baroque church interior says something about the hierarchies who are massed within it for Varga's funeral, their relationship to their men of power who commissioned such showy and flamboyant art to celebrate the power of the church. The austere beauty of the building on the island comments on a society confident enough to build a prison of such powerful essentiality. The huge baroque hall already mentioned is given its resonance by the dramatic exposition of the sequence of power acted out within it as the Police Chief is threatened by the Minister.

The long shots of the Sicilian archive comment on the power of an institution which can command the storage of information on so massive a scale that the human beings are dwarfed within it. It is also an extremely subtle comment on the characters that our exploration of its vastness is given scale and focus by low angle framing, and by the glances of the arrogant-looking Police Chief as he saunters through it. Although Rogas is shown acting confidently in his role of traditional sifter of facts and builder of theories, he is framed in

juxtaposition to his table and notice board. Camera movement (panning up to follow a man in a brown overall climbing a ladder to retrieve a ledger) and mise en scène provide a graphic contrast to the Chief of the Political Section, Groba's laboratory, where information is literally plucked out of the air, unbeknownst to those providing it, stored electronically and analysed systematically.

These shots, which I shall call 'architectural' shots, have different functions within the narrative. In one way they form part of the cultural or reference code of the film and relate to historical and artistic knowledge of Italy, "sans jamais aller jusqu'à construire - ou reconstruire - la culture qu'ils articulent"<sup>50</sup>. Rosi has articulated this as one of his intentions:-

"Je voulais, d'une part, faire sentir cette culture provinciale, et d'autre part, créer une dimension métaphysique. Le sud de l'Italie, avec des villes comme Naples et Palerme, offre ces caractéristiques culturelles précises avec une fantaisie décorative qui permet d'accéder à ce cadre métaphysique. Ainsi la salle des archives de Palerme est d'une imagination architecturale si poétique que l'on croit voir un décor. Ce choix des décors vise à libérer le récit de toute référence trop réaliste, de toute contingence trop actuelle, sans perdre pour autant son rapport au concret et à la réalité. Lecce, par exemple, est une ville des Pouilles où l'on trouve une culture assez raffinée dans les maisons, un type de baroque appelé barocchetto. La justice italienne est pleine de gens qui viennent des Pouilles et de Calabre, régions sévères et austères. Et j'espère qu'à travers les indications visuelles que je donne on pourra comprendre de quelle culture pourrie je parle."<sup>51</sup>

What Rosi calls a here a metaphysical dimension, and elsewhere a 'realtà dilatata'<sup>52</sup> has more in common with early twentieth century 'pittura metafisica', although the films are no strangers to metaphysical discussion. In tracing the origins



of De Chirico's metaphysical painting, Robert Hughes defines it as "a question of mood, the sense of a reality drenched in human emotion, almost pulpy with memory".<sup>53</sup> This description is useful in teasing out the function of these architectural shots and how they work.

These instances of heightened reality, linked to architectural space, constitute moments of excess. These moments correspond to Barthes' 'troisième sens' or 'sens obtus', a site of emotion, of "une émotion-valeur, une évaluation"<sup>54</sup>. Kristin Thompson in her work on Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible analyses strategies of excess where "the physicality of the image goes beyond the narrative structures of unity in a film".<sup>55</sup> Thus the short, link sequence already described where prisoners are taken by the carabinieri in Salvatore Giuliano has excessive elements - the stressed time span making legible the strongly diagonal composition and placing of the soldiers. The camera angle and framings of the Hotel de Paris sequence in Lucky Luciano draws attention to the physical surroundings of the ideological conflict enacted within the space. The choice of location is motivated at the narrative level but could have been filmed differently. In Dimenticare Palermo it is not so much that the crumbling architectural exteriors connote a culture in decline, but that the use of the wide angle lens and repetition of shots draws attention to the metaphorical trope. Similarly, the swooping movements as the camera follows the dancers in the Palazzo del Gangi recalls the movements of the ball in Visconti's film, Il Gattopardo, but goes beyond mere intertextuality by the length of the scene and the richness of the architectural space

framed. The series of blind, dark windows in regimented ranks in the opening sequence of Tre fratelli is disturbed by the rough and hairy rats revealed feeding in close up in the foreground. Disturbance is signalled visually by excess. By this means film is opened up to the realm of the poetic, where connections may be made and the façade of regimented and monolithic society breached.

#### PART 4. Excess

As we have seen, moments of excess in Rosi's films are often associated with architectural shots and strongly diagonal compositions.

One of the indicators of spatial relationships which recurs over and over again in the films is the long shot composed of strongly diagonal planes. These shots can be shown to be a feature of Rosi's style, although rarely identified by critics.<sup>56</sup>

Diagonal compositions, or the composition of the orthogonals within the cinematic frame tending to an asymmetric vanishing point, have been a stock feature from the very first films of the silent period. Jean-Louis Comolli has suggested that the composition of the shot of the train arriving in the station in Louis Lumière's Entrée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat, 1895 is in response to Lumière's desire to frame scenographic space in order to present the maximum visible area for human action - an important consideration in the infancy of cinematic technology, given the heavy and immobile nature of the camera apparatus. By its very calculatedness, this construction shows the imprint of ideology.<sup>57</sup>

I would suggest that, in Rosi's work, far from being

ideologically transparent, these compositions form part of a distancing strategy. Like the long take, or plan séquence, diagonal compositions are a feature of the style of Jean Renoir and can also be seen in the films of Luchino Visconti.<sup>58</sup> They do, however, also occur widely in Italian cinema to the extent that they could be said to draw on a rich, cultural heritage in the plastic arts.

John White<sup>59</sup> draws on observations of architectural structures in hundreds of paintings and frescoes from antiquity to the renaissance in Italy in order to chart the development of theories of perspective. He shows how, although using oblique perspectival constructions, artists such as Cimabue and Giotto in the thirteenth century, were more interested in the realistic depiction of solid forms than in the spaces between such forms. By the late fourteenth century, with experimentation with architectural and atmospheric perspective, artists had come to delight in and exploit the artistic possibilities of the recreation of space, and the difficulties of harmonizing the depiction of realistic space and the demands of the visual plane of the story.

Strongly stressed orthogonals lead the eye into the composition and have the effect of creating a strong impression of spatial depth. Depth of composition allows the placing of details in spatial relationship to each other, further connoting realistic space. Having once discovered it, artists then struggled against this tendency of spatial realism to "burst through the surface"<sup>60</sup> and dominate the work. White suggests<sup>61</sup> that the "difficulty of the task of controlling such powerful forces of visual realism is attested by the



whole history of the evolution of linear perspective" and that one of the illusionistic techniques developed to arrest the apparent movement through the surface into depth was the repetition of diagonals. This is because:-

"It is one of the elements of illusionism that symmetrical designs, which can be instantaneously perceived as a whole without need of second thoughts, have, other things being equal, a more powerful effect of the eye, since they do not invite questioning by the rational mind. Asymmetry is, on the whole, more prone to do this. But a hidden asymmetry, a half-felt difference on the fringes of consciousness, is still more likely to destroy the spontaneous and complete acceptance of illusion. The mind questions, and the spell is broken."<sup>62</sup>

Manipulation of the perspectival systems is, therefore, one way of controlling both the impression of realism and the attention of the spectator.

Diagonal cinematic compositions can therefore simultaneously indicate the presence of a real world constituted in deep space - and through the movement of the eye to the vanishing point, of the presence of offscreen space - and at the same time, put a brake on the 'realism effect'. The most obvious brake is the disturbing asymmetricality of the image which forces the eye to scan distance, but the cinema, unlike painting, can draw on additional, subtle brakes on realism, such as figure movement and camera movement.

We have already examined some features of Rosi's creation of narrative space and the recurrence of architectural shots. Here we will examine compositions dominated by diagonal orthogonal movements within the frame, at asymmetrically composed framings, and at diagonal or asymmetrical movement within the frame. The latter category includes the 'set-pieces' which, as I have mentioned earlier, are a constant

feature of Rosi's work.

### The diagonal composition

Distinctive features of Rosi's style can already be seen in La sfida. Diagonal compositions are used in several ways. The early street scenes allow the eye to travel along orthogonals and note Vito's milieu - the Neapolitan street architecture, the teeming crowds. They create a communicative space with lots of realistic detail. Similarly, the placing of the figures of Vito, Assunta, his mother and the estate agent against the diagonal lines of the modern, luxury apartment they are viewing cues the spectator to make comparisons between the complex, jumbled architecture of the working class quarters of Naples and the clean, modernist lines of the dwellings of those who can afford light, air, and the view of Vesuvius in the background.

The diagonal composition's potential for drama is used to the full in the sequence in the pelota hall which follows the wedding feast sequence. The strong right-to-left orthogonals of the netting around the court stand out against the dark background. The deep field created is used for a strong left-to-right track of the figure of Vito and his confrontation with Gennaro and with the Aiello brothers. The dramatic tension of the sequence is emphasized by the opposing visual movements, by the darkness and by the echoing noise of the game, which acts both to define the space (which cannot be fully grasped in the darkness) and to unsettle.

The device of creating dramatic tension by opposing compositional and camera movement is used again in the penultimate sequence. In the dawn light of a strongly upward, left-to-

right diagonal road, Vito's trucks appear, moving from right to left, the tension underlined by harsh, discordant, extra-diegetic music.

These shots of roadways occur repeatedly in Rosi's films. As I have shown above, these diagonal compositions can be used to cue dramatic tensions. They also frequently, as here, occur as initial establishing shots to a sequence. They are strongly metonymic features by their cue to the presence of off-screen space.

Bonitzer suggests that the cueing of the presence of offscreen space prevents the spectator from becoming "paralysée dans la scène spéculaire" and caught up passively in the narrative.

Rather it cues:-

"... une lecture diagonale à la surface de représentation, dépliant le texte de ses surdéterminations dans un espace fictif (et donc aussi fantasmatique, mais non clos, sans fin déplacé par fracture ou fission de sa scène, espace stratégique), sur une autre scène, scène économique travaillée par l'histoire."<sup>63</sup>

These road diagonals occur regularly throughout the text of Cristo si è fermato a Eboli. Figure movements along the orthogonals stress the way in which space is to be read outwards or inwards. In Eboli, Levi watches the continual flux of peasant movements outwards from Gagliano and returning to it, and he receives visitors arriving by taxi on the road into the town. All of these, however, serve to emphasize visually the fact that he himself does not leave the town and that he is truly 'confined' within it.

In classical Hollywood cinema the asymmetrical placing of figures or actions in the frame is a regularly used device to cue an important action or reaction which will then be



fulfilled in the next shot, ie., where offscreen space becomes screen space.<sup>64</sup> This device is also a stock-in-trade of European cinema, but asymmetricality can also be exploited without an answering reverse shot which completes the space. An example of this occurs at the end of the wedding feast sequence in La sfida where the asymmetrical grouping of Assunta and the wedding guests on the steps cues the absence of Vito. The preceding shots have built up tension between Vito's preoccupation with his tomato deal from which he desperately needs the money, and the demands of the wedding ceremony and feast. His escape from the wedding and absence from the frame therefore has considerable emotional charge. This underscores the political charge cued by the narrative - the absent socio-economic realities which necessitate the desperate struggle for money.

La sfida and I magliari do not feature the grand set-pieces which make his subsequent work so memorable. The nearest equivalent is the external long shots of Vito's home quartiere of Naples, composed of what Francesco Bolzoni calls "le 'disarmonie prestabilite' care al presepio napoletano"<sup>65</sup> Here the orthogonals of terraces and cornices are constrained by the movement of staircases downwards.<sup>66</sup> It is a use of visual excess to indicate the presence of energy which will not be contained within the space assigned to it by those in power (legally or illegally).

Diagonal compositions feature significantly in Rosi's complex and assured Salvatore Giuliano. We have seen how the short sequence introducing the round up in Montelepre uses stressed, uni-directional movements to cue an overwhelming impression of

oppression, of military force. The dialogue reinforces the impression of the alien, unsympathetic and not necessarily intelligent weight of a State power on this community. It also echoes an earlier sequence where Pisciotta and others of Giuliano's band walk down a diagonal street on their way to ambush the guardpost. The text thus provokes reassessments of events of earlier sequences by using the resonance of visual rhyme. It is also a fine example of the visual expression of an intellectual concept - the rhetorical strategy of hendiadys.

In the set-pieces, figure movement within the frame is often strongly diagonal, visual excess strengthening narrative tension. The motivation for these appears to be the display of authorial virtuosity, and the diagonals draw attention to this aim.

In Carmen and Cronaca di una morte annunciata, however, these devices are repeated so frequently as to signal themselves and their insistent decorative linear play as excessive. In Carmen, decorative visual play can be seen as to some extent functional. As Rosi has himself remarked, the structure of the opera and its songs limits the mise en scène; the camera has to do something whilst two characters are singing and to concentrate on a two-shot for several minutes would be tedious to the audience. On the other hand, for the camera to roam too far away would distract from enjoyment of the music. Carmen contains a great many diagonal compositions where the eye is led from one plane to another, in parallel with shifts in song action. The technique is also used to 'fill in' time realistically during orchestral pieces - as when Don José and

his troop ride towards the town to the accompaniment of fifes. A long reverse zoom and rack focus to Micaëla and the carts in the foreground is a virtuoso signalling of a change in the sphere of action as she breaks into song.

Elsewhere slight low-angle shots of coffered ceilings, vaults etc, counterposed to figures acting below, signal dramatic tension. This is achieved by compositions which emphasize strong orthogonal movements which are then broken up by strong transversals. Figures are used to stress the surface and slow down the movement into space. An example of this is the tobacco factory sequences where attention is focussed on the interaction of Carmen and Don José, and the potential for excessive emotion is signalled visually by the coffered roof and columned space around them.

Similarly, in Cronaca, there is a notable dependence on strongly diagonal compositions, broken by transversals. Here the technique is again used to slow down movement outwards and beyond the frame and to stress the enclosed and inward-looking nature of the community. The pictorial excess thus signalled has its counterpart in the narrative.

In the earlier films, therefore, the use of the diagonal composition is strongly linked to dramatic tension. In the later films, where the political agenda is neither insistent nor overt, visual excess (like the melodramatic theatrical form) is an indication of the presence of societal tensions which cannot be resolved within the genre narrative format used.

It is thus a stylistic device which signals the guiding hand of the director, which is, as we have seen, one of the



characteristics of art cinema.

### Conclusion

We have seen how Rosi's films use the codes and conventions of mainstream cinema to construct cinematic space, and how conventions are subverted in order to indicate a critical space in which the spectator is free to make hypotheses about the wider context of events. The mise en scène of spatial relationships becomes a code by which meanings expressed in the dialogues are repeated, or meanings not verbalized are articulated. We have argued that space is depicted primarily to facilitate the entry of the historical and cultural context into the narrative and to provide for the play of metaphorical association.

Furthermore, we have demonstrated that the sense of heightened reality and visual excess are also functions of the creation of space in the films under discussion. They indicate the presence of melodramatic tensions and also constitute the directorial stylistic flourishes which indicate the presence of the author, both of which are necessary to art and 'quality' cinema for marketing purposes.

1. BROOKS, PETER: The Melodramatic Imagination (Columbia University Press, New York, 1985) pp 13-22.
2. Brooks, page 2.
3. See my interview of 1 June 1987 in Appendix Three.
4. LANDY, MARCIA: "The Use and Abuse of History in Melodrama". Paper presented to the BFI Melodrama Conference, July 1992.
5. BORDWELL, DAVID: Narration in the Fiction Film (Methuen, London, 1985) page 209.
6. See my interviews of 28 July 1985 and 26 February 1987, Appendix One and Appendix Two.

7. MASI, STEFANO: Costumisti e scenografi del cinema italiano, vol II (Istituto Cinematografico dell'Aquila "La Lanterna Magica", L'Aquila, 1990) page 60.
8. See my interview of 1 June 1987 in Appendix Three.
9. DE MASI, DOMENICO: "Il Sud si costituisse come parte civile", Paese Sera, 10.3.79.
10. KEZICH, TULLIO: Salvatore Giuliano (Edizioni FM, Rome, 1961) page 188.
11. CODELLI, LORENZO: "Entretien avec Pasqualino De Santis", Positif, 230, page 24.
12. VITOUX, FRÉDÉRIC: "Le pouvoir et ses masques (à propos de Lucky Luciano)", Positif, 155, January 1974, page 21.
13. Bordwell, pp 208-209.
14. BARBI, DERNA; CERVONE, ANNA; CREMONINI, GIORGIO; ROMAGNOLI, PAOLA: Immagini della città (Thema Editore, Bologna, 1989) pp 2-3.
15. Barbi et al, pp 3-9.
16. FURHAMMAR, LEIF & ISAKSSON, FOLKE: Politics and Film (Studio Vista, London, 1971) page 158.
17. BARTHES, ROLAND: Image, Music, Text. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (Fontana, Glasgow, 1977) pp 88-97.
18. Chatman calls these kernels and satellites. Kernels are "nodes or hinges in the structure". Satellites have the function of "filling in, elaborating, completing the kernel..." CHATMAN, SEYMOUR: Story and Discourse (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1980) pp 53-55.
19. "Classic European découpage is more flexible than the American style(s)... integrating travelling movements within sequences routinely, rather than only at beginning or end; having the alternative of the sequence shot for dialogue scenes..." in WILLIAMS, ALAN: "Reading Ophüls reading Schnitzler: Liebelei (1932)" in Eric Rentschler, (Ed): German Film and Literature (Methuen, London, 1986) page 86.
20. For the use of audio-visual space as political metaphor at the international level, see SCHLESINGER, PHILIP: Media, State and Nation: Political Violence and Collective Identities (Sage, London, 1991) pp 144-8.
21. BRANIGAN, EDWARD: Point of View in the Cinema (Mouton, NY, 1984) pp 111-117.

22. Rosi has said that what he admired in Volonté was not so much his mimetic skills in physical imitation of characters like Mattei and Luciano. Rosi saw the Levi figure in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli as an eye and an ear, who would then become the mouthpiece of peasant consciousness. "E Volonté è un attore che recita moltissimo con gli occhi." Rosi interviewed in RUSSO, GIOVANNI: "Francesco Rosi: «Nel film Carlo Levi sono io»", Corriere della Sera, 17.5.78.
23. COREMANS, LINDA: La Transformation Filmique. Du Contesto à Cadaveri Eccellenti (Peter Lang, Berne, 1990) pp 184, 209-212, and "Francesco Rosi: un cinéaste de la modernité" in Revue Belge du Cinéma, 21, Winter 1987/88, pp 29-32.
24. See my interview of 28 July 1987 in Appendix One.
25. BURCH, NOEL: Theory of Film Practice (Secker & Warburg, London, 1973) pp 26-27.
26. Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film, page 189.
27. KAES, ANTON: "History, Fiction, Memory: Fassbinder's 'The Marriage of Maria Braun'" in Rentschler (Ed), page 286.
28. Branigan, pp 55 and 63.
29. Bordwell, pp 77 and 224.
30. JAMESON, FREDRIC: "On Magic Realism in Film", Critical Enquiry, 12, Winter 1986, no 2, page 317.
31. Whittock defines distorsion as something which "must be understood as a deliberate deviation from what is expected in a specific context" thus excluding distorsions which are cinematic conventions. WHITTOCK, TREVOR: Metaphor and Film (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990) pp 63-64.
32. Doubting occurs as a result of narrative disruption. Rosi has always stressed the intellectual role of doubt - "Io sono spinto dal desiderio di conoscere la realtà, ma il mio credo è il dubbio, il dubbio assoluto, la rinuncia preliminare ad ogni certezza. Io non ho la certezza perchè non adopero nessuno degli elementi che potrebbero darmela. Ma se io esprimo autenticamente il desiderio di conoscere la realtà, posso sperare di coinvolgere il pubblico in questo processo conoscitivo. ... Tuttavia, proprio perché il mio credo è il dubbio, io non posso fare dei film a tesi, né posso trarre delle somme." Rosi interviewed in BIRAGHI, GUGLIELMO: "Il caso Mattei", Il Messaggero, 27.1.1972.
33. And on one occasion one of the crew is visible holding the cart in position as Marta climbs on it in the stable sequence in Tre fratelli!



34. ELAM, KEIR: The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama (Methuen, London, 1980) page 156.
35. At the point where Rogas muses, "Lo stato detenuto. E bisognava liberarlo. Ma era in detenzione anche lui: non poteva che tentare di aprire una crepa nel muro". SCIASCIA, LEONARDO: Il contesto (Einaudi, Turin, 1976) page 83.
36. Rosi's preliminary drawings for this film contain a sketch of this sequence in which are the words, "sono i personaggi e i simboli di un mondo troppo duro a morire". ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Dessins originaux de "Cadavres Exquis" in Positif, 200-202, page 165.
37. DALLE VACCHE, ANGELA: The Body in the Mirror: Shapes of History in Italian Cinema (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1992) pp 68-69.
38. MACCIOCCI, MARIA-ANTONIETTA: Pour Gramsci (Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1974) page 167.
39. HUYGHE, RENÉ: "Art Forms and Society" in HUYGHE, RENÉ (Ed): Larousse Encyclopedia of Renaissance and Baroque Art, (Paul Hamlyn, London, 1961) page 239.
40. VENTURI, LIONELLO: "Realism and the First Classical and Baroque Trends", in Huyghe, page 220.
41. Huyghe, page 334.
42. MARAVALL, JOSÉ ANTONIO: Culture of the Baroque (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1986) page 125.
43. TURNER, BRYAN S: Status (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1988) page 38, "While baroque culture desperately sought to bolster conservative society through the elaboration of a whole new culture of display and gaudy ornament, there was not adequate solution to the growing pressure of bourgeois individualism, which was antithetical to much of the traditional order of decorum, privileges and hierarchical values."
44. See my interview of 1 June 1987 in Appendix Three.
45. BONTA, JUAN PABLO: Architecture and its interpretation (Lund Humphries, London, 1979) page 27.
46. Coremans, La Transformation Filmique, pp 120-124.
47. JAMESON, FREDERIC: "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" in New Left Review, 146, July/August 1984, pp 53-92.
48. GEARDA, EDUARDO: Cinema e Transfiguração (Livros Horizonte, Lisbon, 1978) page 29, "A crença na eficácia do duelo, antiga como os rituais litúrgicos, deve

procurar-se, fundamentalmente, na conservação de uma longa tradição mística que acredita cegamente na justiça imanente e num fatalismo sobrenatural que rege a ordem das coisas." [Belief in the usefulness of the duel, which is as old as religious rituals, is essentially the means by which a long, mystic tradition ensures its own survival - a tradition of blind trust in inherent justice and supernatural fate directing the order of things.]

49. GILI, JEAN: Francesco Rosi: cinéma et pouvoir (Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1976) page 30.
50. BARTHES, ROLAND: S/Z (Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1970) page 27.
51. CIMENT, MICHEL: Le dossier Rosi pp 168-169.
52. See my interview of 28 July 1985 in Appendix One.
53. HUGHES, ROBERT: The Shock of the New (Thames and Hudson, London, 2nd ed. 1991) page 215.
54. BARTHES, ROLAND: "Le troisième sens" in Cahiers du Cinéma, 222, July 1970, page 15.
55. THOMPSON, KRISTIN: Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible: a Neoformalist Analysis (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1981) see Chapter 9.
56. Pauline Kael is an exception. KAEL, PAULINE: untitled article on Carmen, The New Yorker, 29.10.84. "... the screen is again intersected by diagonals - the ramp of the hilltop fort where corporal Don José is stationed, the narrow, crooked street, where he walks with shining-eyed Micaëla...".
57. COMOLLI, JEAN-LOUIS: "Technique et idéologie (3): Caméra, perspective, profondeur de champ" in Cahiers du Cinéma, 231, Aug/Sept 1971, page 45.
58. Both are 'art' film directors. It is also significant that Visconti worked as Renoir's assistant on Une partie de campagne (1936) and Les bas fonds (1937), and, of course, that Rosi worked as Visconti's assistant on La terra trema (1948), Bellissima (1952) and Senso (1954). What these filmmakers share is a commitment to a left-wing view of politics and a claim to a closer and more authentic relationship with reality.
59. WHITE, JOHN: The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space (Third Edition, Faber & Faber, London, 1987).
60. White, page 179.

61. "The easiest way to control such space, other than by abolition or limitation, is to exploit the undistorted frontal surfaces which are a characteristic of the renaissance system. Wherever such forms may occur within a composition, at that point the eye is made to move in the directions established by the picture plane. The apparent movement through the surface into depths that seem to lie beyond it, is, if only for a moment, halted. This slowing of the spatial movement is increased by breaking up the orthogonal lines and planes into short, discontinuous lengths, and may be further assisted by burying these forms behind figures or objects that emphasize the surface..." in White, pp 190-191.
62. White, page 158.
63. BONITZER, PASCAL: "Réalité de la dénotation" in Cahiers du Cinéma, 229, May 1971, page 41.
64. See Bordwell, Narration in the Fiction Film page 176.
65. BOLZONI, FRANCESCO: I film di Francesco Rosi (Gremese Editore, Rome, 1986) page 50.
66. The presepio was a baroque genre, developed in Naples and exported to Spain at the end of the seventeenth century. The crèche scenes are said to resemble theatrical presentations, using hundreds of working class actors, from shops, fields, ports and streets.



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT IS "FRANCESCO ROSI"?

This research does not pretend to solve, once and for all, the problem of the relationship of the film director to the film. It has, however, suggested some ways of coming to terms with it.

Foucault's contention that the author is a discursive construction which is accorded status and particular modes of reception within its cultural context is useful. As he remarks of the author-function:-

"... it is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is assigned a 'realistic' dimension as we speak of an individual's 'profundity' or 'creative' power, his intentions or the original inspiration manifested in writing."<sup>1</sup>

Examination of the industrial context of Rosi's films therefore suggested itself as a way of examining how and for what purpose Francesco Rosi is constructed as an 'auteur' and by whom. An 'auteur' can be defined as director who signals himself as the author, the controlling force behind the creative choices in the texts, and in addition, an entity who demands to be considered as worthwhile, of serious purpose and able to stamp his films with the marks of personal expression. Firstly, the research suggests that situating the director and the films in their production context is a fruitful approach. In the case of this research project, examination of the industrial context was limited to analysis of Italian trade papers and statistical yearbooks in order to assess how the Italian cinema industry itself structured the concept of "the director".

It is also a profitable model of research to examine the industrial context in order to ascertain within what parameters it is possible for a filmmaker who constructs himself as serious, or political, to operate. How a filmmaker such as Francesco Rosi uses the opportunities of industrial structures such as genre, audience niche, and distribution, and yet manages (successfully or not) to construct his own agenda, is a fascinating and rewarding area of research.

#### 1. The "actual" author, Francesco Rosi

Chapter One attempted to define the context of the Italian film industry within which the filmmaker, Francesco Rosi, has to work.

Analysis of the Italian box office statistics for the films on which Rosi and his collaborators worked show that, whereas it is the producer who, in the Italian context, is instrumental in assembling financial investment and teams of collaborators early on in a director's career, once that career has been validated by financial success and is established it is the director who can impose a preferred team on a project.

The cinematic institution's own definitions of the director are important as they determine the type of investment which a director's name will attract. On the one hand, previous box office performance will suggest investment in broadly similar subjects or genres, and distribution to a broadly similar audience. On the other hand, the name of the 'author' is important to the negotiating of film projects because it is the guarantee of a certain level of technical competence, which will justify the investment. In the case of the art and 'quality' cinema, it is also crucial to the marketing and

valorising process. Art cinema is often maintained by State validation in the form of structures of subsidy, by film festivals which validate with prizes, and by a critical industry supporting a range of specialist journals. Traditionally film clubs and film schools were considered to feed the art cinema process and provide a constant audience for these films. We have shown that the current structures of the video and television industries are instrumental in maintaining the category of director as significant. Drawing, however, on both the mainstream and the art cinema sectors of the film industry is the quality film. Directors who have received critical validation as 'auteurs' in the art cinema apparatus of journals and festivals, seasons and retrospectives, as creative artists who are able to impose their own personal vision on the collaborative process of filmmaking are sometimes able to move into large budget production. We have argued that, in the case of Francesco Rosi, this move into the big budget, 'quality' film sector of the market was facilitated by financial success at the box office with films which were also accorded critical importance.

"Francesco Rosi" is, therefore, an important entity in institutional terms. His status also enables his films to remain longer in circulation on the distribution circuits. Retrospectives at major festivals, the presence of his films in important seasons of films from Italy or around contemporary themes, television seasons devoted to his work, articles and publications, all these permit periodic reassessments of his work and ensure the permanence of the presence of his films in distribution.



It is, therefore, in Francesco Rosi's own interests to make films which will fit into certain marketing categories, and which will be talked about in particular newspapers and journals. It is also in his own interests to signal his own worth to the public. Textually he does this by foregrounding his own technical competence cinematically and by signalling the subject matter of his films as serious and having a moral weight. Contexting discourses such as interviews are important in this process, as well as having a function in the post-production journey of a film. Books and articles, television and radio programmes - and the theses of postgraduate researchers - are part of the secondary text which all interact with the primary process of production at the level of capital generation as well as that of validating the work as that of an 'author'. The interviews, articles in the press and journals, programmes on the radio and television are also, as Adam Knee suggests<sup>2</sup>, a way in which text expands into context and re-establishes a potential communication with the audience, that is in the context of reception. The secondary text becomes the area in which the audience has access to Rosi's ideas and intentions and where he can potentially influence their readings of his films.

Producers and distributors' perceptions of market trends are also instrumental in determining the nature of a film, primarily its genre attribution. We have seen that certain genres are narratively more conducive to political content than others, notably the investigation and the conspiracy thriller. Rosi's films have also included dramas and an opera film. Within the art and 'quality' cinema sectors of the

Italian film industry, the choice of book (or other work) to adapt to the screen is also of crucial importance.

What that filmmaker, thus constituted, will be able to do, the artistic statement that filmmaker will be able to make, will also depend on other institutional developments both nationally and internationally, and on legislation and State intervention.

This study is the first to attempt to analyse the discursive construction of Francesco Rosi as an 'auteur' by situating his work in the context of the Italian media industries. Examination of the interplay between industrial structures, primary text and the secondary text allows Rosi's own voice to be situated within the secondary text. We contend that this is a more satisfactory model for dealing with the considerable literature detailing authorial intention than assigning to it an ultimate truth and intentionality which is then narrowly reflected in the texts. Our study thus differs from all previous work on Rosi described in the Introduction, with the exception to Jean Gili's Francesco Rosi: Cinéma et Pouvoir. Gili's work attempted to tease out what was Rosi's and what was the contribution of his collaborators in the texts. Our study goes beyond it, and takes into account the very interesting question of the work which Rosi has to accomplish to function as an entity within the Italian cinema. Francesco Rosi has recently made reference to this aspect of filmmaking in an article deploring the lack of finance and institutional support for Italian cinema, which have resulted in a situation in which:-

"... hanno obbligato i registi a dover impiegare la

maggior parte delle loro energie non a provocare quelle emozioni alle quali si affida il successo di un film, ma a farsi procacciatori di fonti finanziarie, o anche mediatori e contabili, riducendo lo spazio creativo a momenti rimediati, caratterizzati più che altro dalla fretta, dalle difficoltà e dall'approssimazione, o dall'angoscia dei superi dei preventivi."

The approach of our study also provides a framework within which to explain the interplay and tension between codes and conventions of mainstream, art and 'quality' cinema and the progressive simplification of the internal 'instructions' from which the spectator makes sense of the texts and constructs meanings.

The area of the 'Quality' genre film is particularly apposite and unresearched. This study has contributed to an understanding of the category of the 'quality' film through its analysis of the industrial context of Rosi's career. Two lines of future enquiry suggest themselves. Firstly, box office statistics of recent films by 'quality' directors, might reveal a concentration of film product in a particular investment category. It would be interesting to see if this were true, and if so, whether it had resulted in stylistic developments.

By extension, in this connection it would be useful to analyse typical shot lengths in Rosi's more recent films in order to confirm or refute the impression that they are rhythmically different. Our contention is that the demands of the 'quality' genre and its international mass market impose narrative clarity and that this results in a slower editing pace and fewer camera set-ups.

Finally we have observed that, in the current state of the



cinema industries, 'quality' directors such as Francesco Rosi become trapped by the structures of the industry into repeatedly producing a certain kind of film. Even if they wanted to make a low-budget film, they might be unlikely to be able to put a financial package together for this type of project.

## 2. The "implied author", "Francesco Rosi"

Chapters 2 - 5 have attempted to identify the marks of enunciation in the texts which indicate the presence of the "implied author", Francesco Rosi. This task has been approached through an examination of strategies aiming to convey an ideological position or comment on political events. The choice of the concept of implied author displaces attention from events in the life, times and individual psychology of Francesco Rosi as determining factors in the formation of the texts, to an examination of how the texts themselves generate their meanings, and how they interact with contemporary society.

By retracing the marks of narration through 'shifters' (individual marks of enunciation, the "I" or concealed "I" of the narrative), the ideological address of a film is exposed, in that a film which conceals its marks of enunciation tends to naturalise and do this, although most films contain moments/sections where a subjectivity becomes apparent. Films influenced by the work of Brecht, avant garde and political films foreground it. Histoire has been considered the mode of the mainstream fiction film, where mise en scène and editing function to give the spectator the position from which to make the text most intelligible and evidence of narrating

is, for the most part, suppressed. Discours on the other hand is "... every enunciation assuming a speaker and a hearer, and in the speaker the intention of influencing the hearer in some way."<sup>4</sup> The underlying mode of Rosi's films is, as our textual analysis has shown, discours, the marks of authorial enunciation being made very obvious.

Detailed textual analysis of the film texts has been crucial for a number of reasons. It has permitted the testing of previous statements about Francesco Rosi's work against the texts themselves, and it has allowed an assessment of the area of the films' political agenda and efficacy.

#### An engagement with history

Firstly we have shown that Rosi's work is characterized by an engagement with history and with the state of contemporary Italy. Even when a film's diegetic world is other than Italy yet the hierarchy of the film's discourses organize that world to stand metaphorically for the Italian situation. Thus, Hamburg in northern Germany, southern Spain, the province of Cartagena in Colombia, and even imaginary lands are, through the organization of elements of mise en scène, identified as connected to aspects of the Mediterranean world.

The narrative motivation for an engagement with history takes the form of a disruption. It is often the ultimate disruption constituted by death. Death is not just a disruption but, as Ricoeur has suggested<sup>5</sup>, as a reminder of the succession of generations, it is one of the connectors between lived time and universal time which facilitates the creation of a diegetic world which is perceived as realistic. Events are brought forward from the past and reworked for the implied

reader. These events and other connectors to the past orientate the enquiry and anchor the texts to the extra-diegetic world, of which they are a part.

Events selected usually allow a gap to be perceived between appearances and the conventional explanation for them. The choice of disruptive events, and the mixture of real and fictitious happenings, provokes the formation of hypotheses of cause and effect and directs attention to mechanisms which are usually concealed.

The importance of history, and the historicization of events which are normally presented as natural and unproblematic, is reflected in the weight afforded to the notion of the chronicle in Rosi's narratives. Moving from the past to the present and from the present to the past allows cause and effect hypotheses and connections to be made.

The investigative format is the ideal mode for the testing of hypotheses. It also situates the goal as a knowable and verifiable truth. Rosi's films thus have an ontological claim to present facts as they really happened, or as they really are. The stress in the primary and secondary texts on authenticity - of the diegetic world, of characters, sets, places etc forces a literal denotation on the viewer, but, as Whittock suggests:-

"... they also force something else: a demand that the surrounding narrative, by its integrity or compassion or moral perspective, must earn the right to employ such images."<sup>6</sup>

#### Realism and the moral authority of the texts

We have seen that the codes and conventions of realism have been used in Rosi's films in order to signal the moral



authority of the alternative view of society which he presents.

Thus the films use location shooting and non-professional actors to signal authenticity. Secondary texts also stress the 'truth' of the sources used and the attention to accuracy in reproducing places, events and character mannerisms.

We have also seen that the narrative exigency to present a large amount of informational material has imposed stylistic solutions which draw on these realist conventions. The texts must also signal the authority of the "author" and they do this by simultaneously working against the effacement of stylistic flourishes which normally characterizes the realist mode.

Rosi's editing patterns reply to two necessities; firstly, the need to vary the image to prevent the spectator becoming bored whilst the information is being presented; and secondly, to the need to emphasize which pieces of information are more significant than others. His political agenda influences the choice of stylistic paradigms. Elements of Rosi's style consist of the intra-sequence use of the long take; rhythmic editing of framings within the set pieces; the use of shot-reverse shot editing patterns for visual variation rather than the masking of dominant ideological relationships; consistently starting sequences with a close-up and then moving to the establishing shot; and the juxtaposition of diegetic spaces by the means of video screens.

Recent theoretical developments in film and literary criticism have stressed the limitation of investigation to how the texts themselves generate their meanings, and have suggested the

impossibility of getting past texts in order to apprehend 'reality' directly. This stress on textuality is ultimately problematic when considering films such as Rosi's which, following Gramsci, demand an engagement with contemporary political issues, contend that change is possible, and that the mechanisms of power must be apprehended in order that they may be combatted.

The question of cinematic realism is a theoretical minefield into which this study has ventured with some trepidation, but with awareness that there are issues which must be explored, although the current tendency is to block or displace them. Rosi's realist agenda informs all his films but to different degrees. Rosi's realist concerns are both ontological, in that his films make assertions about the nature of the real world, and epistemological in that he works on the assumption that it is possible to know the nature of the processes which structure knowledge, and therefore to know why it is that we do not know something. We have argued that traces of this realist agenda can be seen even in Carmen and C'era una volta, not so much in the use of realist conventions such as the accumulation of naturalistic detail, authenticating devices such as photographs, witnesses etc, shooting in exterior locations, camera movement in deep focus shots, but also in the organization of the mise en scène to suggest another reality under the surface. His is a critical realism in that even Cristo si è fermato a Eboli, Tre fratelli, Cronaca di una morte annunciata and to some extent Dimenticare Palermo, whilst offering the pleasures of nostalgia for a rural or less complicated past, attempt to show that that very

nostalgia operates to mask the political and economic strategies which have contributed to the marginalization of the rural world. Issues around realism in the cinema will remain topical areas for research for some time to come.

Rosi's camera work is characterized by the persistent use of the zoom, rack focus, crane and mobile camera in order to emphasize arguments or to explore space; the consistent variation of camera set-ups unmotivated by character movement; the use of the wide-angle lens to emphasize the architectural volumes of the spaces represented; the use of the long take; and recurring diagonal compositions. Directorial énonciation is foregrounded by their use.

Rosi's use of sound is similarly both realist and emotive. It can provide a further level of connotations to the meaning of narrative space, and it can be disruptive and disorienting.

#### The rhetoric of persuasion

In analysing how Rosi's films are structured so as to suggest various preferred meanings and conclusions, we have taken advantage of structuralist and neo-formalist methodologies. Structuralist analyses have considerable advantages because they provide methods of analysing the play of signs, codes and conventions at work in a text. However, in reducing the text to its underlying structure, no room is left to account for audience pleasure, or anything else apart from this structure. Our analysis of the industrial context of Rosi's work attempts to suggest that there is a much more complex relationship between the audience and the films than the evidence of box office receipts would allow. The textual analysis of the interplay of codes within the texts also indicates a much more



complex invitation to pleasure for the audience. Much Marxist criticism, for example, seems to have been suggesting that the audience must be rewarded by feeling good at having identified the "correct" analysis of class, or other oppressive, relations. We have seen that Rosi's films are constructed to persuade and that many of the persuasive devices belong to the codes of melodrama, generating an emotional response.

As we have seen, the texts employ a wide range of techniques to persuade the spectator of the truth of the conclusions of the investigations. The implied author is the source of these strategies of persuasion. The rhetorical and other devices used function to impose the conviction which upholds the implied narrator's vision of the world.

The films use the codes and conventions of neorealist and expository cinema, but allied to the codes of melodrama, to persuade of the veracity of the arguments presented, and it is through this persuasive agenda that ideological strategies are perceived. A wide repertoire of authorial voices is mobilized - character, the character whose views bear a resemblance to Rosi's own recorded views, the collective chorus, contemporary witnesses to events, and those specifically cinematic voices, the photograph, the video insert, and the voice over.

On the other hand, Brechtian strategies and alienation effects such as stressed framing and cutting, sound/image mismatches, shooting against the light, and the drawing of attention to the image as construction, all focus attention on the act of enunciation and on the director as enunciating subject.

The films are therefore marked by a tension between an obsessive attention to naturalistic detail in the interest of

establishing the authenticity of the viewpoint, and the need to signal dominant discourse as a construction by breaking conventions and indicating the artifice of the representation. The *mise en scène* of Rosi's films reveals this dichotomy. The rationale of expository cinema is to assemble arguments, rather than to present a linear narrative. Framing, lighting, camera movement, décor and sets, colour, and performance are orchestrated with the view to maximum communicativeness of assertions and points of view. Space, for example, is therefore not necessarily only constructed according to illusionistic principles to be as communicative as possible of a 'reality' out there. It is, however, also constructed according to expository principles to offer preferred meanings to the spectator about the nature of social space and social interaction.

It is by their emotional charge that rhetorical devices attain the force of persuasion, and recurring patterns of rhetorical devices can be shown to constitute part of the style of the implied author. We have shown that some of these rhetorical tricks are part of the common currency of mainstream cinema, generating multiple cues to the formation of hypotheses about preferred meanings. Figures of repetition, redundancy, hyperbole, homology, rhyme, simile, accumulation, circumlocution, synecdoche, antonomasia and paradox are familiar in popular narratives and advertising, being used in the interests of maximum communicability.

In art cinema, which presumes a more sophisticated and active audience, these are joined by more complex figures, such as ellipsis, hendiadys, dubitation, allusion, asyndeton, paradox.

Metaphor and metonymy are fundamental to both popular and art cinema. We have shown that, on the one hand, metaphor and metonymy are crucial to the anchorage of the visual image, and at the same time, to the generation of connotations and additional layers of meanings about society and societal relations.

In the hands of a self-conscious, intentionalist filmmaker rhetorical devices are signifiers of authorial intention and therefore constitute an ideological discourse in themselves as well as, in the case of Rosi's films, indicating that certain ideas, concepts and institutions are discussable and open to readings by the spectator which might conflict with the preferred readings of the status quo.

#### The offer of pleasure

The pleasures offered by art cinema are most often deliberately set in opposition to those commonly associated with mainstream, popular film. Whereas the classic Hollywood film relies on cause and effect logic motivated by character (but character only developed to the level of generic appropriateness or compositional unity), Bordwell sees art cinema as more about introspection than action. The puzzle of classical narrative - "who did it" - is replaced in art cinema by the puzzle of plot (not story) - "who is telling this story and why this way?"<sup>1</sup>. The audience first seeks resolution of ambiguities in the text by looking for realistic motivation for the problem and, when this is not available, seeks authorial motivation. Rather than being passively swept along by a narrative which employs action or emotion to suspend disbelief and involve the spectator, the viewer of an art film



is typically offered the active pleasure of deciphering references and 'reading' the text.

Steve Neale similarly<sup>8</sup> attempts to explain European art cinema by equating it with, amongst other things, a stress on visual style. Visual style is one of the pleasures of art cinema, permitting the identification and appreciation of intertextual references. For Neale, the art film's marks of enunciation are signifiers of authorial voice. The author, therefore, whilst existing outside the fiction, still has a role inside the textual space as an element of performance, ambiguity or of excess - those moments of disturbance/threat, visual delight, excess of style or moments where everything is made clear.

The analysis of the construction of spatial representations in Rosi's films has been especially rewarding. It has suggested ways in which films with a political agenda relate to the society of which they are a part. In Francesco Rosi's case, visual delight is the result of the interplay of colour and tone, framing and composition, and camera movement. So frequently are framings and compositions unmotivated by narrative demands, such as character movement or point of view, and so insistent are the plastic elements as indices of meaning, that visual excess can be said to be an extremely important aspect of Rosi's style. In fact the stylistic excess of these films lends itself, as Edward Said has argued, to reception "as the signature of its author's manner...":-

"... The paradox is that something as impersonal as a text... can nevertheless deliver an imprint or a trace of something as lively, immediate, and transitory as a "voice".

...style neutralizes the worldlessness, the silent,

seemingly uncircumstanced existence of a solitary text. It is not only that any text, if it is not immediately destroyed, is a network of often colliding forces, but also that a text in its actually being a text is a being in the world.

... The point is that texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society. In short, they are in the world, and hence worldly."

Thus the collection of features which can be shown to constitute the style of Francesco Rosi, besides answering an industrial and marketing function of firstly of art cinema, then later of 'quality' film, also demand that the film texts be considered not only as self-contained textual systems, but also in their relationship to the larger society of which they are part.

#### Authorial power

Although much has been written about Francesco Rosi as a political filmmaker, this research is the first to attempt of identify the rhetorical strategies by which the texts communicate preferred meanings about Italian society. At this point the analysis of the industrial context has been complementary in suggesting reasons for differing levels of communicativeness from film to film.

The research shows that the films draw heavily on the codes and conventions of mainstream, popular cinema, such as the documentary/expository mode, the investigative thriller and the melodrama, whilst offering a subversive, alternative, reading of the dominant political discourse of the Italian State. Not only has the use of a modernist practice of political cinema less prevalent than at first imagined, but the realist strategies of mainstream cinema proved more

flexible than initially surmised in suggesting alternative views to those of dominant ideology.

We have seen how, at key points, the films are heavily constructed by means of rhetorical devices to communicate a particular authorial conclusion, whilst at others, the communication of preferred readings is much more allusive and likely to be taken up by an audience familiar with Rosi's work, Italian cinema, left-wing debates, or art cinema generally.

These authorial demands, or instructions to reading, are as we have seen structured by rhetorical figures in the texts. As such, they indicate an unequal power relationship in the discursive situation. What unites all these demands is the over-arching rhetorical device of *aporia*, by which Rosi signals his doubts as to the veracity of his statements of what happens in the texts and his own interpretations of these statements. Hayden White suggests in his tropological analysis of historical discourse that, by this means, an ironic distance from the texts' discourses is imposed. He suggests that irony is metatropological in the sense that:-

"... it is deployed in the self-conscious awareness of the possible misuse of figurative language. Irony presupposes the occupation of a "realistic" perspective on reality, from which a nonfigurative representation of the world of experience might be provided. Irony thus represents a stage of consciousness in which the problematical nature of language itself has become recognized."<sup>10</sup>

Whilst leaving open some of the questions and doubts raised by the texts, Rosi's films control the areas to be investigated. By their adherence and insistence on the codes and conventions of realism the films do not permit the competence of the



"implied author" to make the investigation to be called into question. In sum, therefore, the figure of Francesco Rosi suggests itself as and acts as guarantor of the quality of the investigation. Interpretation of his visualization of political realities is beyond his control, but the texts constantly seek to assert their own power by shaping preferred readings of contemporary society.

This study has not taken a narrowly expressive auteurist approach to the work of Francesco Rosi, refusing to allow that personal creative vision and psychology can be the only forces which shape the final form of the texts. Similarly, although structuralist analysis has been useful in identifying the play of communicativeness and ambiguity in the texts, we have considered that the role of the director and the context of filmmaking to be equally important. This work is significant on a number of accounts. We have suggested that the slightly different market destinations of Rosi's films do offer an explanation for the levels of complexity of narrative organization and *mise en scène*. The part of our work on the industry also goes beyond that of Neale and Bordwell to propose the existence of the 'quality film' sector which takes its characteristics from the mainstream and the art film areas of production. We have considered that Rosi's move into this area was facilitated by the fact that his concern with uncovering political structures behind events led him to clarity of narrative exposition, rather than to the ambiguity usually associated with art cinema, and that this clarity of expression made him able to adapt to the demands of

mainstream, mass entertainment.

We have found neo-formalist studies useful in identifying the marks of enunciation in the texts, and the strategies used to engage the emotions and the intellectual capacities of the audience. Our work has identified how the films under discussion use existing codes and conventions, and the way in which contemporary genre models were used and reinflected. Again, the industrial study does proffer an attempt to explain how the subjectivity of the director interacts with the subjectivity of the audience via the secondary text.

Finally we have attempted to answer Foucault's question as to why the author is necessary by recourse to the cultural and economic context of Rosi's production, and through analysis of the different egos within the texts. We have shown that Rosi has taken advantage of the former to make himself industrially acceptable, and that constituting himself as an "auteur" has been useful in this process.

This study has attempted to go beyond identification of Rosi's themes and use of sources to identify the cinematic choices and rhetorical structures which make his films distinctively different. We have identified recurring elements which have contributed to the formation of a 'Rosi' style and those figures, or 'shifters' within the texts which are the marks of énonciation, or authorial voice. We suggest that these indications of authorial presence are absolutely necessary to, and a function of, the 'quality' sector of the industry which Rosi occupies.

In common with the work of other researchers, this study comes

to the conclusion that Rosi is indeed an 'auteur'. We have identified consistencies in themes and preoccupations across his work, and critics agree overwhelmingly that these are to do with representations of power and the South of Italy. We have differed from Michel Ciment, who uses the evidence of Rosi's use of sources to indicate the work of his personal vision in the films. Our detailed textual analysis has shown how Rosi indicates seriousness of purpose and moral authority within the texts. Although intermittently critics have commented on aspects of Rosi's style, and Linda Coremans has identified facets of it in her exhaustive study of Cadaveri eccellenti, this study has broken new ground in identifying characteristic rhetorical structures and authorial markers in the texts. Again, this study differs in the suggestion of the connectedness of industrial and stylistic strategies and offers a new approach to examining Francesco Rosi as 'auteur'.

In December of 1992, RAI 3 broadcast Francesco Rosi's Diario Napoletano. With this film, Rosi directs a television film in which a film director, called Francesco Rosi, goes back to Naples with two young researchers in order to prepare a film on his own home town. The narrative is a collage of events purporting to be part of this process of preparation. We see the director taking part in a conference on Naples in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Naples, at which he is applauded and scenes from his Le mani sulla città are shown. The sequences chosen are the titles announcing the Venice Golden Lion, the first, in which Nottola expounds his strategy of land speculation, the collapse of the building in



Vicolo Sant'Andrea, Councillor De Vita's denunciation of the speculators, right-wing protestations of clean hands, Nottola and Maglione's confrontation in the former's office delineating the practice of buying votes. These film inserts alternate with reaction shots of the audience, including Carlo Fermariello who played De Vita remarking that he would change nothing. Very early in the film, therefore, Rosi signals himself as an 'auteur' whose work has continual relevance in the contemporary situation of 1990s Italy. A vast array of experts from the academic and administrative worlds testify to the problems of Naples and to its importance. Actuality reportage delivers footage of interviews with teenage delinquents, unemployed drug addicts and traffickers, discoveries of several murdered bodies in the streets. The director continually has to navigate Naples through monstrous traffic jams. He explores the architectural heritage of Naples, contrasting it to the Orientale development which has little connection to the lived life of the napoletani. Cue shots of Rosi looking pensive provoke flashbacks to sequences from Lucky Luciano and Cadaveri eccellenti in which characters comment on how political power is exercised, and to a black and white reconstruction of an event in his childhood when he and a group of friends saw an Allied bombing raid over the coast. Aerial shots from helicopters over the city abound. Eminent experts testify to Naples' problems.

This film seems to encapsulate the concerns discussed in this study - the interaction of other media in the construction of the author-function, the intervention of the historical figure of the author in that construction, the mobilizing of

rhetorical devices to persuade (a) of the authority of the author and (b) of his thesis. The latter contends that Naples has been ruined by corruption stemming from the historical situation of the US occupation of the city, from pre-existing social organization which privileged the operation of illegal organizations, and from economic intervention at State level which encouraged a parasitic and unproductive mode of life. We also see those marks of authorial voice in the exploration of social space and the wide-angle, architectural long shots. We are able to interpret the film within Rosi's oeuvre as a whole, and to explain the deviations from documentary norms and its very existence by the fact of the cultural agenda of Rai 3's scheduling.

Rosi himself suggests that the only way forward for a filmmaker of reformist tendencies, faced with the collapse of left-wing political certainties, is the interrogation of contemporary reality:-

"Il est vrai que la santification du profit est en train d'entamer, d'endormir, la fonction du cinéma dont je parlais, qui est d'interpréter la réalité. La société de consommation qui en résulte incite le cinéma à avoir une vision hédoniste de la société, à gommer les problèmes graves de l'existence... Tout se fonde dans une vision accommodante de la vie. Les problèmes sont aseptisés, on évite de donner à réfléchir."<sup>11</sup>

Several shades of irony, and areas of ambivalence suggested themselves during this study. Central to these is that, whilst Rosi's films have as their strategy the attempt to go behind the depiction of individual achievement with which dominant ideology masks the collective operations of hegemony, perhaps because of demands in the media industries for

'authors', they tend finally to end by asserting the supremacy of the individual through the operation of their controlling metadiscourses and insistence on authenticity.

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## APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCESCO ROSI

Cambridge/London, 28 July 1985

*- Lei sta preparando un progetto su un libro di Gabriel García Márquez - vuole descrivere questo progetto un po'?*

Il libro si chiama Cronaca di una morte annunciata, ed è una storia di un assassinio al quale partecipa tutto un villaggio in America Latina per questioni culturali, di natura spagnola di origine cattolica. E la storia di un giovane che è supposto di avere violato l'onore, la verginità di una giovane, e quindi, i fratelli di questa giovane devono vendicare quest'onore. Ecco, quest'è la storia, apparentemente molto semplice però in effetti molto complessa, perché attraverso questa storia c'è uno studio di tutti i caratteri, uno studio, come ho detto prima, delle origini culturali di questo mondo, e soprattutto del desiderio da parte di questi giovani di sottrarsi a queste regole mostruose, perché i personaggi di questa storia sono tutti amici tra di loro. E sono tutti molto giovani - intorno ai 23, 24, 25 20, e quindi cercano di sottrarsi a questa legge mostruosa della difesa dell'onore attraverso il sangue. C'è questa inchiesta di una vittima sacrificale. Ma non è possibile. Tutto il villaggio che partecipa a questo rito, all'ultimo momento vorrebbe sottrarsi, vorrebbe tirarsi indietro, in virtù di un'altra legge che quella dell'ipocrisia, che si accompagna quasi sempre a un certo tipo di educazione. Però è troppo tardi perché ormai il meccanismo è tratto in funzione.

E la storia di un delitto di onore, però delitto di onore in

un mondo dove, malgrado tutto quello che è successo nella psicologia, nella storia, certe regole hanno ancora un valore.

*- E c'entra anche la metafisica?*

Ma, io credo che sempre la metafisica ha il suo spazio in questo tipo di mondo e di cultura, in tutte queste storie nelle quali il destino e gli uomini viene regolato da un tipo di volontà che non è assolutamente quello dell'individuo, e che appartiene a delle tradizioni culturali o ad una stratificazione ideologica, religiosa,

*- Ha qualche giovane attore in mente?*

Sì. Ho molti personaggi. E io voglio fare un film per far capire che importanza ha nel mondo tropicale, nel mondo caraibico, la diversa provenienza razziale. Nei Caraibi si trovano delle diverse provenienze razziali, diverse culture. Perché ci sono spagnoli, ma anche inglesi, olandesi, ci sono italiani, arabi e cinesi. Quindi la mescolanza delle razze e delle culture ha molta importanza per capire quello che va succedere; come ha molta importanza il clima. E un mondo particolare che io conosco un po', come conosco la lingua. Penso di poter essere abbastanza autorizzato a esprimere questo mondo. E allora io cercherò di adoperare degli attori italiani, francesi e spagnoli latino americani - mescolare un po' tutto.

E la storia è molto più complicata e complessa di quello che ho raccontato, perché io ho cercato di raccontare il nodo narrativo... Ci sono storie degli adulti, le storie delle madri, le storie dei padri. Poi passano 25 anni dal momento in cui questa giovane viene violentata, e respinta dal marito. Venti cinque anni di vita nel desiderio e nell'amore per

quest'uomo che l'ha respinta ad aspettare il suo ritorno. E poi c'è la storia della madre del ragazzo che viene ucciso che è molto importante anche quella. Quindi è un film molto complesso, molto difficile anche che vale la pena di fare...

- *I libri di García Márquez di solito creano un mondo particolare con dettagli realistici, ma c'è sempre un fondo un po' fantastico.*

Sì, ma ci sono due correnti diciamo nella letteratura di Márquez. Una è decisamente fantastica, e l'altra è realistica. Questa Cronaca di una morte annunciata appartiene alla corrente più realistica, come anche la storia di un naufrago... Ma, malgrado quest'appartenenza al mondo realistico, c'è sempre nella letteratura di Márquez una dimensione metafisica. Non è in alcuni libri decisamente fantastica, però è una dimensione nella quale la cronaca, la realtà, vive in una maniera, diciamo, più dilatata rispetto alla realtà vera.

Ecco, io credo che sia la difficoltà di rendere questo tipo di realtà - che però ho già trattato nel mio film Cadaveri eccellenti.

- *Sì, nel personaggio del giudice Riches?*

Il libro di Leonardo Sciascia, Il contesto è basato sulla realtà, però praticamente si svolge in una dimensione metafisica. Anzi nel libro Sciascia non fa riferimento ad un preciso mondo reale.

- *E un paese immaginario...*

Certamente. Potrebbe trattarsi della Sicilia, come potrebbe trattarsi dell'Italia. Naturalmente in un film io avevo una difficoltà a far capire al pubblico di fronte alla fisicità delle immagini che potrebbe trattarsi di un posto piuttosto



che di un altro. E poi francamente ho scelto la strada della identificazione di un paese preciso perché mi sembrava che fosse più giusto per me affrontare temi che affrontava Sciascia portandoli, transferendoli, nella identificazione precisa dell'Italia e degli italiani e del mondo sociale, politico italiano in un momento preciso.

Quindi ho già trattato questo tipo di narrazione realistica ma allo stesso tempo metafisica...

- *Lei si è sempre interessato alla relazione dell'individuo con la collettività?*

Sì, e con il potere naturalmente.

- *Ha avuto delle difficoltà con la produzione di Cronaca di una morte annunciata?*

Sì, ci sono state delle difficoltà perché - in America Latina non è facile - e oggi film costano molti soldi dappertutto il mondo. E poi c'è stato le difficoltà che ha avuto la Gaumont in Italia, alla quale faceva capo questo progetto. Ma in questo momento io penso che è possibile ricontare questo progetto. Non sono sicuro al cento per cento, ma spero.

- *Di solito lei prepara per due anni i suoi film?*

No... E la mia media, io ho fatto 13 film in 27 anni. Ma ci vogliono due anni di preparazione... per decidere la storia, per scriverla, per preparare per il film e per farlo uscire. Ma certe volte per esempio, tutto questo periodo di lavorazione completa dall'inizio dell'idea fino all'uscita del film sullo schermo mi ha preso un anno solo. Per Salvatore Giuliano ho fatto tutt'in un anno, e così Cadaveri eccellenti, Tre fratelli, Cristo si è fermato a Eboli, Il momento della verità. Hanno richiesto più tempo per ragioni varie, non dipendenti dai miei personali tempi, C'era una volta, Carmen,

Le mani sulla città, I magliari. Ma io sono abbastanza rapido dal momento in cui è deciso la produzione... Molte volte il tempo viene preso dalla decisione e soprattutto dall'organizzazione finanziarie di un'affare, perché richiede tempo.

- *Lei ha incontrato García Márquez?*

Io sono amico di García Márquez da parecchi anni.

- *Da quando lei è andato in Colombia per il progetto su Che Guevara?*

Sì, quando io sono stato in Bolivia quando volevo fare questo progetto, in Bolivia, Messico, in Perù e a Cuba. Ma ho conosciuto il García Márquez subito dopo che è uscito il suo libro Cento anni di solitudine, perché l'ho cercato per dirgli quanto mi piacesse quel libro, per dirgli tutta la mia ammirazione. E siccome anche il García Márquez ammirava i miei film, ci siamo incontrati su un terreno di stima e ammirazione reciproca, e siamo diventati amici. Ecco, e ci vediamo sempre o a casa mia a Roma o a casa sua a Barcellona, o Parigi o Bogotà, insomma un po' in giro per il mondo.

- *E lui non si interessa a far qualcosa con la sceneggiatura del suo film?*

Io gli ho fatto leggere la sceneggiatura ma lui ha scritto il libro e come tutti gli scrittori che sanno che un film appartiene di più al regista e il libro appartiene di più allo scrittore (così come ha fatto Sciascia quando ha scritto Il contesto), sa benissimo che il film sarà il mio film. Però allo stesso tempo sarà il film di uno che rispetta moltissimo il suo libro e che ama moltissimo il suo libro.

- *Lei spera di avere anche una distribuzione televisiva di questo film?*

Oggi per fare i film c'è sempre un accordo con la televisione. Quindi ci sarà anche una distribuzione televisiva del film, però non di una serie.

- *Ha smesso definitivamente con il progetto su Sabato, domenica, lunedì?*

Quello sì. Per il momento non se ne parla...

- *E l'altro progetto sulla Sicilia e l'America?*

Sì, ci ho un'idea da molto tempo che vorrei fare un film di un immigrato americano che ritorna. Praticamente non è mai stato in Sicilia. Ci sta per la prima volta... e riscopre la sua cultura, le sue origini. Quest'è un tema che mi piace.

- *Tema anche di Tre fratelli*

Appunto, anche di Tre fratelli. Ci sono un po' questi temi che riguardano la società italiana ma anche la cultura esportata, no? ... è un po' modo di vivere a metà, con un piede in un posto e un piede in un altro, no? E il dramma di tutti gli emigranti, di tutti quelli che vanno a cercare un suo futuro in un altro paese.

- *Perdono la loro identità...*

Certo, rischiano di perderlo. Lo perdono completamente alcuni, però s'integrano nelle nuove culture. Però molti invece cercano di recuperare la vecchia cultura perché restano in un qualche modo legati. Anzi, molte volte la nostalgia o la non-diretta conoscenza della cultura di origine ... (come nel caso di questo film che vorrei fare - questo personaggio che non è mai stato in Sicilia ma ne ha sentito parlare)... diventa peggio perché diventa una cultura mitica, mitizzata. Diventa falsa perché il mito può falsificare le cose, le può rappresentare in una dimensione di sogno, che non corrisponde



ad una dimensione di realtà.

- *Cerca produttori americani per fare questo film?*

Vedremo! Certamente è un progetto internazionale che avrà bisogno di varie alleanze - italiane, americane...

- *Il tono del suo film, Tre fratelli, era, almeno per me, più lirico che, per esempio, Le mani sulla città.*

Certo. Ma sono due cose diverse. Le mani sulla città parte, diciamo, dall'intenzione di spiegare come può avvenire, attraverso quali tecniche, quali meccanismi, la speculazione delle aree, dei terreni - attraverso la complicità dei vari poteri - economici, politici, finanziari, e poteri molte volte anche non ufficiali, anche poteri criminali che si mettono d'accordo. Allora questa esigenza di spiegazione offre spazio ad un'aspetto anche didattico. Cosa che, nei Tre fratelli non c'è, perché è una narrazione più libera e più lirica. Però, anche in un film come Le mani sulla città, credo che ci sia un'aspetto lirico quando il racconto riguarda le vittime di questo tipo di speculazione, cioè il popolo, la gente. Lì il film diventa lirico. Certamente in un film come Tre fratelli c'è molto più spazio per i sentimenti - anche perché ho scelto quella strada per raccontare dei problemi reali attraverso i sentimenti dei personaggi.

- *Allora i suoi temi si sono sviluppati attraverso gli anni?*

Sì, sono anche modificati, approfonditi nella tecnica del racconto o anche nel modo di rappresentarli almeno.

- *Io trovo che nei suoi film ci sono delle inquadrature di una bellezza straordinaria - per esempio, in Cadaveri eccellenti ci sono tutti questi meravigliosi volumi architettonici...*

Sì, ma il cinema è fatto per creare delle belle immagini, per vedere. Un film è fatto di luce, quindi anche di spazio, di

volumi, perché la luce si esprime attraverso i volumi, i spazi. E il cinema è anche architettura. Non c'è nessun arte, io credo, che assomiglia di più ai volumi architettonici come il cinema.

- e negli esterni di Cadaveri eccellenti, per esempio...

E c'è quella piazza, quella piccola piazza...

- Dove c'è l'ozioso?

Esattamente. In quel piccolo paesino Siciliano... era meraviglioso, era bellissima perché fatta veramente di puri spazi, di puri volumi - come sono gli spazi, i volumi che si possono incontrare nei quadri metafisici di De Chirico.

- Con quell'atmosfera molto strana...

Sì, esattamente. Quell'atmosfera in italiano, si dice, rarefatta. Io ho modificato un po' la scenografia di quella piazza perché intorno a quel monumentino c'era un giardinetto con un piccolo cancello che lo circondava. Però questo disturbava l'idea che io avevo di questo spazio, di questi volumi e di questa pulizia. Allora, ho chiesto al mio scenografo di coprire questo giardinetto - non di distruggerlo, che io le piante non avrei mai potuto pensare a distruggerle. Allora ho fatto coprire con una costruzione sulla quale poi ho fatto mettere delle pietre ed ho fatto togliere il cancello.

Allora questo monumento è diventato molto più essenziale e pulita nella piazza, e la piazza ha acquistato una sua unità dal punto di visto scenografico e architettonico. Non era più disturbata da questo verde che c'era in questo giardinetto. Questa piccola cancellata avrebbe disturbata questa unità che io volevo dare alla scenografia di questa piazza. Faccio

spesso questi interventi scenografici per ogni mio film.

- *per esempio?*

Quasi sempre. La natura è bella, però controllata.

- *Allora, non è il realismo per se stesso?*

No, mai. Non esiste. Il realismo per se stesso non significherebbe nulla in un film.

- *Per me il piacere che ricevo dai suoi film risiede nelle immagini e anche nei campi lunghi quando la macchina da presa va da un soggetto ad un'altro. Il dramma nei suoi film non è soltanto nel montaggio ma anche nel girare...*

Quando io faccio una scelta delle immagini, già cerco di avere presente il montaggio finale del film. Quando giro un film, già prevedo la successione delle immagini. Naturalmente, mi lascio anche un margine di scelta al momento del montaggio. E questo, per esempio, succede più spesso quando giro con due camere. Ma quando giro con una camera, ho già fatto la mia scelta dei fini tempi. Qualche volta ho girato anche con tre camere... per accumulare del materiale che mi consenta una scelta maggiore. Ma di solito a me piace molto, per esempio, da un long shot, da un campo lungo, passare ad un primissimo piano. Così sottolineo il personaggio, anche psicologicamente, perché credo che la psicologia di un film è nel montaggio del film, non nei personaggi, anche se i personaggi obbediscono ad una condotta psicologica. Quindi può far capire allo spettatore del film meglio di qualsiasi tipo di azione o di dialogo che possa esprimere la psicologia di un personaggio. Cioè la sottolineatura di un taglio, dell'inquadratura, quell'è la psicologia.

- *Per esempio, in Cadaveri eccellenti, il personaggio rappresentato da Charles Vanel, controposto alle immagini delle mummie?*



Certamente. Lì, per esempio, non c'è il dialogo... era molto difficile far capire al pubblico che cosa volesse significare quella sequenza. Allora, certamente, bisogna cercare di comunicare l'ambiguità anche delle immagini, perché le immagini possono essere molto ambigue. In quel caso le immagini devono stabilire un rapporto ambiguo tra il personaggio e il suo interlocutore, che in quel momento erano le mummie e un'ambiente in quale si trovavano. Cioè i significati erano diversi.

*- Le interessa adesso piuttosto le relazioni umani che il contesto politico?*

Sì, ma credo che una cosa non esclude l'altra. Cioè io penso che la scelta di un contesto politico o di un contesto sociale non impedisca assolutamente di approfondire delle relazioni umani. Anche in un film certamente diverso da Tre fratelli, com'era Salvatore Giuliano per esempio, credo che ci fosse spazio, già allora, per poter capire certe relazioni umani. La scena del riconoscimento del cadavere del figlio da parte della madre fa capire la relazione tra la madre e il figlio. La scena degli abitanti di Montelepre deportati, con intervento delle donne, fa capire relazioni umani. Credo che la forza del cinema consiste proprio in questo, che è possibile raccontare i sentimenti umani senza bisogno di esprimerli attraverso la parola.

*- Ma i suoi personaggi femminili non sono stati importanti fino a Carmen...*

Io questo lo contesto un poco. Certamente ci sono stato dei film dove i protagonisti erano maschili. Nelle Mani sulla città erano tutti uomini, ma perché era una storia di un potere gestito dagli uomini. In un Consiglio Comunale

d'Italia fino ad oggi, tranne qualche rara eccezione, chi gestisce ancora il potere politico e il potere amministrativo sono gli uomini, non c'è dubbio. Quindi, volendo fare un film di quel genere dovevo raccontare storie di uomini. Così nella storia di un 'tycoon' dell'industria, come Mattei, sono storie di uomini, non sono storie di donne. Però in un film come I magliari, per esempio, c'è un personaggio di donna che io credo piuttosto riuscito e interessante - questa tedesca che s'innamora di questo ragazzo italiano, questa strana storia di amore.

- Sì, e questa ragazza rappresenta qualcosa della società tedesca?

Certamente, perché quella donna rappresenta un certo tipo di decisione, di rimanere nella realtà della vita senza farsi, diciamo, turbare dai sentimenti. Quindi, quella donna lì rappresenta un mondo completamente diverso da quello del ragazzo. Io credo che era riuscito quel personaggio. Anche nella Sfida, il personaggio della giovane donna ha il ruolo che la donna occupa in quel tipo di società. E una società nella quale gli uomini - secondo la mentalità del Sud... e di una società dove c'è la camorra, la mafia - hanno il sopravvento e la gestione di un certo potere. La donna in quella società è un personaggio sempre subordinato agli uomini. Esiste in maniera subordinata, e l'ho rappresentata in maniera subordinata. Nei Tre fratelli, ci sono tre personaggi femminili che occupano il loro ruolo. Poi Carmen, invece, c'è il trionfo della donna!

- Sì, ma penso che l'ondata di Carmen adesso sia un po' una reazione violenta contro il movimento femminista, perché Carmen è bella, sensuale, intelligente, indipendente - ed è punita!

Sì, ma è punita non perché gli uomini vogliono punire le donne.

- *Perché è una donna indipendente?*

E punita perché quell'uomo lì, don José, è un debole. Non è un vero uomo forte, è un debole e quindi non riesce a dominare la donna attraverso la stessa forza che quella donna esprime. Quell'è una donna che esprime intelligenza e indipendenza, e anche naturalmente, erotismo e sessualità. Però esprime soprattutto il desiderio di esercitare il suo diritto all'indipendenza di giudizio, di decisione e di autonomia. Invece quell'uomo non è così. Non è tanto intelligente quanto quella donna. Non è tanto libero quanto lo è quella donna. Credo che questo dipende molto anche della differenza di ceto sociale e di cultura, perché quella donna è una donna autentica che appartiene al popolo autenticamente, mentre invece Don José (specialmente nell'edizione di Bizet, non nella edizione di Mérimée) è un piccolo borghese. Quindi non è veramente padrone autenticamente delle sue azioni e del suo modo di vedere la vita, perché condizionato di false verità. Quindi quando uccide Carmen, uccide per debolezza, non per forza. E un uomo molto più debole della donna che uccide. E quest'è la grandezza, secondo me, di una storia come Carmen. E una storia che piace, popolare, perché è un tipo di donna che piace... Carmen non è una puttana nell'edizione di Bizet, e una donna libera che cerca di essere libera e di trovare la sua indipendenza, e gli uomini purtroppo non sono abituati a questo tipo di scelta da parte della donna. Quindi quell'uomo l'uccide.

Ma non è una questione di anti-femminismo. Il femminismo,



secondo me, il vero femminismo è sempre esistito. E quello di cercare di riconoscere il diritto alla donna di conquistarsi il suo posto allo stesso livello dell'uomo. Però per la donna è molto più difficile che per l'uomo, perché la donna deve continuare a corrispondere ad un'altro ruolo che è quello della madre e di quello della moglie. La donna oggi, purtroppo, ha molto più da soffrire del uomo - deve fare la madre.. la moglie.. la donna libera, per poter lavorare anche e godersi la vita - vivere la vita con quella stessa libertà che l'uomo ha il diritto di avere.

Non credo che questo si risolva attraverso il femminismo.

*- Il femminismo ci ha aiutato!*

Molte volte ha peggiorato la situazione, francamente, quand'è diventato troppo esasperato, quando è diventato troppo ideologico. Credo che aiuti la situazione solamente il rispetto che una donna riesce ad ottenere da un uomo e il rispetto che un uomo riesce ad avere per una donna... Ma anche quello è difficile di raggiungere perchè io non conosco molti uomini che hanno rispetto delle donne perché non sono abituati ad avere rispetto.

*- Lei ha detto parecchie volte che fa dei film per fare lavorare gli spettatori.*

No, non è che io voglio fare lavorare lo spettatore. Però penso che lo spettatore al cinema debba essere coinvolto delle storie che vede, non solamente al livello delle emozioni ma anche al livello dei ragionamenti, della riflessione. Per certi film è bene che lo spettatore sia attento e che si faccia coinvolgere anche dal cervello non solamente dalla pancia, dal ventre.

- *Ha qualche concezione dei suoi spettatori?*

No, io solamente ho una concezione degli uomini come sono... viviamo al livello di ventre ma anche al livello di cervello. L'uomo è tutto e uno spettatore di film è potenzialmente tutto. Penso che quando ci si rivolge ad uno spettatore, bisogna cercare di rivolgersi a tutte le sue possibilità... Infatti nei miei film, non è che faccio solamente dei discorsi; faccio dei film con dei sentimenti, con passioni, con spettacolo, con possibilità di commuovere. Dei discorsi... sono affare dei giornalisti. Non faccio il giornalista; faccio uomo di cinema, sono cineasta.

- *E il suo lavoro prima di fare La sfida le è stato molto utile - lavorare, per esempio, con Matarazzo, Emmer...*

Ho lavorato con 3, 4 registi. Ho lavorato in teatro con Ettore Giannini, poi ho fatto il cinema con Visconti. L'ho fatto con Emmer, con Matarazzo - che era un tipo di cinema diverso, molto diverso da quello di Visconti. Una volta ho fatto anche l'assistente ad Antonioni e a Monicelli. Poi ho lavorato molto come direttore di doppiaggio in Italia per alcuni film. Ho fatto lo sceneggiatore anche per dei film di altri, non solamente per i miei film.

Io scrivo sempre i miei film con i miei collaboratori. Sono autore delle storie dei miei film e delle sceneggiature dei miei film assieme ai miei collaboratori.

- *I suoni nei suoi film sono importante?*

Per me, sì, è molto importante la parte sonora del film. Sì, mi piace molto. Io sono uno dei pochi registi italiani che ha cercato sempre di fare il suono diretto in un film.

- *Per esempio, in Tre fratelli, ci sono tutti questi suoni di uccelli che creano una vera atmosfera...*

Certo. Sì, anche nella Carmen ci sono i rumori e i suoni, malgrado la musica.

*- Era difficile dare spazio in Carmen ai suoni naturali?*

Non era difficile perché anche se Bizet non ha mai immaginato che la sua musica dovesse essere accompagnato dai rumori, però s'inserisce talmente bene in un clima naturale. Non credo che anche i più sereni melòmani siano stati disturbati da quelli uccelli o pure dagli zoccoli dei cavalli, o dalle gride della plaza de toros. Dell'altra parte, lo stesso Bizet aveva immaginato nell'ultimo atto la musica da plaza de toros; non può essere immaginato senza immaginare l'intervento della folla.

*- Lei ha sempre la speranza che la società italiana cambierà?*

Penso che in genere tutte le società dovrebbero cambiare per assicurare agli uomini un maggiore senso della giustizia, sia dal punto di vista della distribuzione di quello che c'è al mondo... sia della giustizia nella proprietà, attraverso la libertà e la democrazia.

Detto questo, certamente l'Italia è un paese dove c'è molto differenza tra la cultura del nord e la cultura del sud, tra il progresso del lavoro nel nord e il progresso che si è riuscito conseguire nel sud. Quindi io spero che in Italia questa differenza di culture, questa differenza di ricchezze, questa differenza di pronunzia possa essere, diciamo, colmata. Io spero - ma ci vuole tempo.

Purtroppo io ritengo che si continua a passare attraverso degli errori di scelte. Uno (e non parlo certamente per un giudizio personale, ma parlo attraverso quelle che sono i giudizi di economisti, storici ed esperti dei problemi del



lavoro) è stato nel dopoguerra, fino agli anni settanta, di non industrializzare l'agricoltura nell'Italia del sud. Sarebbe stata una grande ricchezza. Invece si è pensato negli anni cinquanta di esportare molta forza lavoro dal sud verso il nord. E sono partiti dai cinque agli otto milioni di giovani.

- *Cifre enormi!*

Sì, cifre enormi. Per il nord dell'Italia, o per la Francia, la Svizzera... Ora io credo che questo fatto abbia non solo impoverito il sud della sua forza giovane, ma che abbia creato tutti quelle conseguenze negative che io ho cercato di rappresentare nel film Tre fratelli - cioè, appunto, un certo sradicamento culturale, con il desiderio magari poi di tornare indietro. Insomma, il problema del lavoro nel sud dell'Italia è un problema più grosso da risolvere - la disoccupazione giovanile nel sud è molto maggiore che nel nord.

APPENDIX TWOINTERVIEW WITH FRANCESCO ROSI

Rome, 26 February 1987

*- E la scelta degli attori dipendeva della compagnia di produzione?*

No, la scelta degli attori lo faccio io - Li ho scelto io in tutti i miei film - e corrisponde a questo criterio di cosmopolitismo, di cui le ho parlato prima. Sulla costa della Mare dei Caraibi, sulla costa atlantica, la caratteristica maggiore è propria questa confusione di varie razze. Si trova gli spagnoli, gli inglesi, gli arabi, gli italiani, i neri, i mulatti; sono tutti messi insieme. Quindi ci sono anche vari accenti, vari provenienze culturali, ed'è per questo che io ho cercato molti attori di diverse origini -non solo per ragioni di coproduzione. Essendo questo un film italiano e francese, per legge c'è bisogno avere un certo numero di attori e italiani e francesi. Però questo, naturalmente, trattandosi di un film di questo carattere cosmopolita di cui ho parlato, mi andava bene.

Nel film ci sono quaranta attori parlanti, perché è tutto un villaggio che deve vivere. Malgrado questo numero elevato di personaggi, nel film si parla abbastanza poco.

Mia figlia fa uno dei ruoli nel film. Fa Flora Miguel, la fidanzata di Santiago Nasar. Sono molti giovani nel film.

L'ho girato in lingua spagnola, in presa diretta, com'è il mio abitudine per quasi tutti i miei film. Cerco di girare in presa diretta anche se in Italia non c'è stato per il passato quest'abitudine. Adesso i giovani invece cominciano a apprendere questa buon'abitudine.

Ed è girato anche in inglese, perché si immagina che Rupert Everett sia un personaggio di straniero nel film. E uno che può venire da una di queste isole dei Caraibi che sono rimaste di cultura britannica.

*- E i voci spagnoli hanno l'accento dei Caraibi?*

Sì, perché ci sono attori colombiani. Però il colombiano, lo spagnolo che si parla in Colombia, è rimasto la lingua castigliana, lo spagnolo più puro che si parla oggi al mondo. Non con quel accento che si può trovare in Messico, oppure in Argentina o in Venezuela. E un castigliano molto puro, per cui un'attore spagnolo che parli un castigliano senza particolare accento può benissimo mettersi insieme ad un'attore colombiano che parli del castigliano puro che le dicevo. E infatti io ho cercato anche di avere attori di lingua spagnola, spagnoli autentici, con attori colombiani. Abbiamo girato in questo villaggio che le dicevo sul rio Magdalena. Il villaggio si chiama Mompòx. E una piccola città, la cui fondazione risale a 1535, appena dopo che arrivarono i primi soldati e colonizzatori spagnoli in Colombia. Aveva un traffico fluviale molto importante perché il rio Magdalena è un grande fiume che attraversa quasi tutta la Colombia, e va a finire al mare. Sfocia nella città di Barranquilla.

Io ho girato parte del film a Mompòx e parte del film a Cartagena, che è un'altra vecchia città del seicento, molto bella, che si affaccia sul mar dei Caraibi. Ora per molti anni, Mompòx è stato una città importante perché era attraversato dal fiume che ne aveva fatto un porto importante. Però poi, qualche anno fa, il corso del fiume ha deviato per



ragioni naturali, e allora Mompòx è rimasta tagliata fuori dal corso principale del fiume, e quindi ha perso quella importanza.

Ed è per questo che l'ho scelto. Prima di tutto perché ci ha delle vecchissime case, case coloniale bellissime, che risalgono al seicento. Poi perché, essendo rimasto un po' tagliato fuori dalla evoluzione e dei tempi, dà proprio impressione che sia un mondo un po' fermo nel tempo, dove viene giustificato questo delitto assurdo da una cultura un po' tagliata fuori da un tempo più evoluto. E come le dicevo prima, la caratteristica della costa dei Caraibi è che un villaggio che si affaccia sul fiume viene definito di costa, lo stesso anche se non si affaccia sul mare, perché il fiume porta al mare. Viene definito di costa e ci ha la stessa umanità, la stessa caratteristica degli abitanti, sia fisica che culturale.

C'è questa mescolanza di razze tra neri, spagnoli, inglesi, italiani, arabi. Ed è per questo che ho diviso i set tra Mompòx e Cartagena, mescolando ambienti. Ho girato tutto dal vero, naturalmente. Non c'è niente in teatro. Solamente ho ricostruito la piazza in una località vicino a Cartagena su, anche quello, un braccio del fiume che va al mare. La piazza di Mompòx da una parte era un po' troppo piccola, e dall'altra, siccome è il mercato della cittadina, sarebbe stato impossibile immobilizzarlo e mandare via questo mercato e farlo diventare un set cinematografico. Sarebbe costato troppi soldi; molti più soldi di quello che ha costato ricostruire la piazza a Cartagena.

- Ha cercato un certo tono cromatico per l'atmosfera del film

*di questo libro?*

Sì, ma il tono cromatico viene fuori, diciamo, è un po' imposto dalla realtà stessa dei Caraibi, perché lì i colori sono certamente più violenti. La luce è più cruda...

*- Una luce che scolora?*

Sì. Tutto questo naturalmente è stato interpretato e riprodotto dal direttore della fotografia, Pasqualino De Santis. Quando Gianni Di Venanzo è scomparso, ho proposto a Pasqualino di diventare direttore della fotografia, e lui ha preso coraggio e lo ha fatto. Ormai Pasqualino è uno dei direttori di fotografia più ricercati nel mercato internazionale. Ha preso un Oscar in America.

Abbiamo girato... con attori professionali mescolati anche ad attori improvvisati, com'è mio abitudine anche questo. Ho preso molte persone che non avevano mai fatto il turno e li ho fatto diventare attori. In questo sono stato aiutato dal fatto che io parlo la lingua spagnolo...

*- Ci sono molte comparse?*

Sì, ma non solo comparse ma proprio anche attori con piccole battute. Anche le piccole parti nel film hanno rilievo perché questa è una storia raccontata un po' come la composizione di un mosaico - mette insieme tante piccole tessere, tante piccole passelli...

*- Per ricostruire un tempo?*

Per poter arrivare ad avere un risultato unico omogeneo, attraverso il racconto che deve naturalmente andare anche al di là di quelle che sono le suggerimenti che dà il libro (che è un libro di poche pagine). E raccontato in questo movimento tra il presente e il tempo della memoria che è un movimento

narrativo che mi è molto congeniale. E in Salvatore Giuliano, come lei sa, dato che appunto si è occupata dei miei film, c'è questo metodo narrativo che rompe...

*- che evita un tempo presente?*

Sì, appunto. Che mette insieme il passato e il presente, ma senza una soluzione di continuità. Non sono dei flashbacks.

*- E un'interrogazione continua?*

Sì, appunto, e anche in questo film io ho adottato questo sistema che si passa dal ieri al oggi senza una soluzione di continuità. Come in Salvatore Giuliano finisce ad essere un discorso intorno alla morte, intorno ad un ragazzo che dev'essere ucciso; un discorso su un delitto assurdo inaccettabile. Assurdo perché si tratta di sacrificare la vittima per poter lavare con il sangue la vergogna che è stata portata ad una famiglia del villaggio, in quanto la figlia, andata in sposa a questo straniero è stata poi ripudiata la stessa notte delle nozze perch'è trovata non vergine dal marito.

Ora questo rituale del sacrificio per lavare la vergogna che ha infangato l'onore di una famiglia appartiene un po' a tutta la cultura del mediterraneo; e quindi, naturalmente dal mediterraneo attraverso la Spagna è arrivato perfino in Colombia. Ma, mentre nei paesi che sono bagnati dal Mediterraneo, sta un po' scomparendo, questa legge dell'onore, fatta rispettare con tanta ferocia, in Colombia invece, che è un paese molto violento, tutto questo rimane ancora ben vivo. Infatti nel villaggio, in Mompòx, non appariva affatto come una cosa molto straordinario, o molto lontano nel tempo nella vita dell'uomo; era una cosa attuale possibilissima.



Quindi, fare un film contro la violenza in un paese particolarmente violento mi sembra che possa essere un punto di partenza per poter raccontare molte cose sull'uomo, che valgano la pena di raccontare - questi sentimenti fondamentali come l'amore, l'amicizia, attraverso appunto un'assurdità come quella di richiedere a due amici, ragazzi giovanissimi, poco più di vent'anni, di uccidere il loro amico, altrettanto giovane, con il quale fino a un'ora prima sono stati gli amici inseparabili - e di farlo sotto gli occhi di tutto il villaggio, senza che il villaggio intervenga...

*- Ma, la morte di Santiago nel libro mi pareva un po' più violenta che non sia stata nel film...*

Nel libro viene raccontato che Santiago poi cammina con le sue viscere nella mano ma questo, francamente, devo dire, non occorre poter rappresentarlo in un film. Non c'è bisogno. Il libro e il film sono due cose molto diverse. L'importante è rimanere nello spirito di quel libro, interpretarlo senza alterarne lo spirito né i significati. Questo è importante. E altrettanto importante farne un'opera autonoma ed è quello che io ho cercato di fare quelle rare volte che ho fatto dei film da libri (sono quattro, e un'opera lirica, su 14 film).

*- Dalla sceneggiatura che ho letto, c'è una sequenza tra Flora Miguel e Santiago Nasar dove lei dà più importanza al fatto che la morte sia annunciata a Santiago che nel libro.*

Non lo so. La cosa che mi ha maggiormente impegnato nel racconto di questo film è di cercare di far venir fuori la complessità di tutti questi personaggi che parlano molto poco nel film (come del resto parlano pochissimo nel libro). E una delle cose nelle quali sono soddisfatto. Quando lei arriva alla fine del film, se li ricorda di tutti, anche quelli che

ha visto per un momento. Se li ricorda chi sono, che funzione hanno in questo racconto, che è allo stesso tempo corale, ma anche con una attenzione più accentuata su certi personaggi piuttosto che su altri.

- *Tutti questi pezzi di mosaico avanzano la narrativa piuttosto che i dialoghi?*

Appunto. La cosa importante è di intrecciare le vite di queste personaggi attraverso due epoche, malgrado che siano passato 27 anni. Il personaggio che ritorna al villaggio natale a raccontare la storia è ossessionato dal ricordo di questo delitto assurdo che non è riuscito mai ad accettare né a spiegarsi. Tra l'altro perché non c'è nessuna certezza che il ragazzo ucciso sia stato colpevole. Ed è questo il tormento di questo personaggio che ritorna che era l'amico suo più caro.

E mi sono preso questa libertà che, invece di fare ritornare nel villaggio lo scrittore (com'è nel libro di Márquez) ho fatto ritornare uno dei personaggi del racconto, Cristo Bedoya, il ragazzo che studiava medicina, che è diventato medico. Mi sembrava molto importante mettere in evidenza il sentimento dell'amicizia.

- *Piuttosto che l'amore?*

Sì. No, è una storia dell'amore e dell'amicizia, dell'amore amicale.

- *I rapporti tra questi personaggi creano il dramma?*

Certo. Questi rapporti, i sentimenti, che legano questi vari personaggi sono abbastanza interessante nel film.

- *Dunque, il nodo della storia non è chi ha sedotto la ragazza?*

No, non è importante saperlo. La cosa importante è sapere

perché il villaggio si avvii ad uccidere un ragazzo di vent'anni sotto gli occhi di tutti, senza che nessuno faccia niente per evitarlo, o perlomeno, non senza nessuno. C'è il personaggio di Clotilde Armenta che cerca di evitarlo, però è invano e non ci riesce.

*- E lì il legame con i suoi altri film?*

Questo è come tutti i miei film. Se ho scelto questo libro, l'ho scelto perché ho trovato molte tematiche che mi appartengono e anche un metodo narrativo che mi appartiene. Non voglio dire che io abbia l'esclusiva di quel modo di raccontare! Non solamente in Salvatore Giuliano, ma anche in Il caso Mattei, Lucky Luciano, c'è il metodo dell'inchiesta. E un metodo che appartiene al mio modo di fare il cinematografo.

*- E anche un metodo che dà piacere allo spettatore, che coinvolge lo spettatore.*

Io spero di sì. L'importante era di riuscire ad ottenere che lo spettatore potesse assistere a qualche cosa ma, allo stesso tempo, esserne coinvolto in modo che potesse vivere come in prima persona le passioni che si vedono nel film, e la tragedia.

*- Quale sarà il suo prossimo progetto?*

Sto pensando a qualche cosa, ma naturalmente adesso devo uscire fuori da questo film che mi ha un po' imprigionato. È stato un film difficile sia per il tipo di racconto, per la tensione che si deve comunicare allo spettatore (è stato un po' come un puzzle, la composizione di questo mosaico), sia perché il libro apparentemente sembra molto cinematografico, ma in effetti è un libro molto letterario secondo il mio punto



di vista. Non è stato facile farne una sceneggiatura. L'ho fatto assieme a Tonino Guerra.

Il film non è stato facile anche per tutte le difficoltà produttive che ha avuto, e anche per la grande avventura che ha costituito tutto il periodo delle riprese. La Colombia è un paese difficile, perché i trasporti sono molto avventurosi. Trasportare uomini e merci da una città all'altra all'interno della Colombia ha richiesto molto tempo e un'organizzazione molto complessa. Il caldo, molto forte, tropicale... Mompòx non è stato organizzata per raccogliere naturalmente facilmente una troupe cinematografica, sia per ragioni logistiche che per ragioni igieniche da tutti i punti di vista!

Abbiamo dovuto ammetterlo un po' tutto e fare i conti anche con la necessità di rimanere nei limiti di budget.

*- Si può sapere com'era il suo budget!?*

Mah, il budget! Io credo che questo film costi alla fine, al cambio attuale, otto, nove milioni di dollari. Non è una grande cifra. Sono 13 miliardi di lire. Però, di questi 13 miliardi di lire, bisogna poi calcolare quanti di questi miliardi vanno a coprire gli interessi passivi del danaro delle banche, le garanzie bancarie. Oggi nei film il danaro che va a coprire le necessità di riprese, cioè il danaro che si vede poi sullo schermo, è una piccola parte di tutto il danaro che è il costo. Purtroppo oggi in un film, il costo del danaro è elevatissimo, e quindi il costo del danaro assieme a tutte le forme di garanzie, di assicurazioni, non si vedono nel film. Però esistono nel budget.

*- E ci sarà anche uno sfruttamento su videocassetta, per*

*esempio attraverso il Virgin Films?*

Certo. Ormai i film in tutto il mondo vengono sfruttati non solo attraverso la diffusione televisiva ma anche la diffusione nelle videocassette.

*- Allora, è una cosa complessa calcolare le zoni di rendimento?*

Sì, è molto complicato. Oggi le leggi dello sfruttamento cinematografico sono molto cambiato rispetto a pochissimi anni fa. E con ogni anno che passa naturalmente l'importanza della diffusione televisiva e delle videocassette aumenta. Con l'aumento di questa necessità di sfruttare il film anche per la televisione e per videocassette, aumenta le difficoltà per l'autore di un film.

*- Ma lei deve essere anche un industriale!*

Non solo per difendere l'integrità del film perché queste televisioni che interrompono il film con i 'commercials' l'interrompono senza un criterio, e distruggono proprio l'integrità del prodotto. Oggi è sempre più difficile difendersi da questo, perché bisogna riconoscere dell'altra parte che i costi dei film sono molto aumentati, e quindi è molto difficile pensare di poter ricoprire un film senza dovere diffonderlo attraverso le reti televisive o le videocassette.

APPENDIX THREEINTERVIEW WITH FRANCESCO ROSI

London, 1 June 1987

- Vedendo la sua Cronaca di una morte annunciata mercoledì, mi ha colpito la prevalenza di campi lunghi.

Ma! Non so se ci sono più campi lunghi in questo film piuttosto che in altri! In questo film ci sono campi lunghi perché il paesaggio è importante. E uno degli elementi costitutivi per capire il contesto del luogo dove si svolge questa storia. E importante poter vedere bene il fiume, la piazza, capire bene dove ci troviamo, perché attraverso il paesaggio si esprime anche una parte della cultura di quel paese.

- E stato criticato dai francesi, per esempio, per essere troppo melodrammatico.

Una parte dei francesi. Bisogna stare attenti perché ci sono delle critiche francesi che invece hanno capito bene quello che io ho fatto e che si sono espressi in termini molto positivi sul film. Poi ci sono alcuni che si sono fatti dei riservi dicendo che nel film si privilegiava piuttosto che un'ottica politica la storia dei sentimenti, e quindi diventava un po' melodrammatico.

Ora, io non credo che ogni volta che io faccio un film devo esprimermi attraverso un'ottica necessariamente politica. L'impegno in un film non è solamente e necessariamente politico. Può essere anche cercare di capire una società attraverso la sua cultura e attraverso alcuni fatti, alcuni avvenimenti che sono inseriti in questo contesto culturale e sociale. Per quanto riguarda il melodramma, quando si parla di passioni, di una storia dove c'è l'amore da una parte, la



morte dall'altra, credo che è molto difficile evitare la vibrazione dei sentimenti. Certo, non considero il melodramma qualche cosa di dispregiativo, di minore.

Io credo che si faccia un po' di confusione per quanto riguarda i sentimenti rispetto all'inchiesta su questo crimine, questo delitto d'onore. A me non ha interessato nel film fare l'inchiesta sul delitto perché non era un'inchiesta giudiziaria che mi interessava (e dall'altra parte, l'inchiesta giudiziaria non interessa neanche Márquez). Quello che interessa è ripercorrere gli avvenimenti di trent'anni prima, ma c'è una specie di sofferenza nella memoria che io ho voluto esprimere in questo film. E una ricerca della verità più ampia, della verità umana, della verità culturale del paese, delle ragioni per cui può essere successo un delitto così assurdo. Un ragazzo di vent'un anni viene ucciso da due amici suoi che non lo vogliono uccidere e cercano di farlo sapere a tutti perché possono impedire questo delitto. Tutto questo per me significa ripercorrere gli avvenimenti con una sofferenza che esprime un sentimento della memoria, un sentimento anche della nostalgia, un sentimento anche della sofferenza, una certa dolenza, diciamo. Non è l'inchiesta che mi interessava in questo film.

*- Ma anche in Cadaveri eccellenti non le ha interessato e non ha interessato a Sciascia il delitto stesso, chi ha ucciso i giudici, ma il contesto?*

Il contesto, la società, le ragioni per cui attentinano certi delitti non chi era l'autore del delitto. Chi è stato a togliere l'onore ad Angela Vicario, non è questo che si vuole capire. Se io avessi fatto solamente un'inchiesta di questo genere, dopo venti minuti sarebbe finito il film! Invece ci

sono tante altre cose da raccontare.

- *Sì, e forse la critica ha dimenticato che anche i film neorealistici erano melodrammatici!*

Certo. Anche il mio primo film, La sfida, era un film nel quale si parlava di un delitto dove c'era dentro la passione. Dove c'è passione è molto difficile che non ci sia il melodramma. Il melodramma che cos'è? E l'esaltazione dei sentimenti ad un certo livello...

- *Anche un po' eccessivo?*

Sì, certo, sentimenti anche un po' eccessivi, perché un ragazzo può essere ucciso perché viene accusato di aver tolto l'onore ad una ragazza - che poi in definitiva dev'essere un fatto privato tra due persone. La madre della ragazza, che è quella che, praticamente, spinge a questo assassinio, naturalmente esprime delle passioni molto forti.

- *e ho trovato anche elementi piuttosto realistici...*

Sì, è realistico e allo stesso tempo un po' metafisico perché c'è un'interpretazione della realtà che in certi momenti sta ad un gradino più alto della realtà quotidiana.

- *Viene fuori un po' dalla luce, dalla stranezza della luce?*

Sì. Questa poi è la luce tipica dei Caraibi. E una luce molto violenta, molto cruda. Come ho voluto far vedere la natura di quei posti (perché in quei posti sia le piante, i fiori, il fiume, gli animali, gli uccelli hanno una grande importanza nella vita della gente), ho voluto darla la sua collocazione giusta e importante. La natura dei posti diventa un personaggio.

- *Ci sono dei verdi profondi; c'è anche una prevalenza del bianco e nero, per esempio all'inizio; non era molto colorato il fiume...*

Infatti il fiume, la nave, il paese, quando lo vediamo per la prima volta ci appaiono in una luce immersa in un'atmosfera generale che toglie un po' i colori accesi nella natura, no?

*- Mi hanno colpito anche alcune composizioni in profondità, per esempio il negozio di Clotilde Armenta con la piazza in fondo.*

Quella piazza l'ho ricostruita. Praticamente sarebbe stato molto difficile inquadrarla avendo delle immagini totali. Poi non sarebbe stato facile far capire i tempi della uccisione, la fatalità di certi avvenimenti. Tutto sarebbe accaduto in pochi metri. La madre avrebbe sentito tutto; è diventato tutto assurdo. Quindi ho girato in quel paese, ma poi la piazza l'ho ricostruita vicino a Cartagena.

Ma l'altro motivo per cui ho fatto questo è che la vera piazza di Mompòx è il mercato della città... Poi la ricostruzione della piazza è stato solamente una ricostruzione delle facciate delle case, tranne l'interno della latteria di Clotilde Armenta che è stato costruita apposta per poter inquadrare il palazzo tutt'intero dagli spazi delle porte per poter vedere sempre questo palazzo come riferimento.

*- E questa ricostruzione le ha permesso di fare qualche carrellate molto veloce...?*

Certamente, delle carrellate che dovevano riprodurre la velocità, la rapidità della fuga del ragazzo rispetto agli altri.

*- E poi c'è una composizione in profondità nella casa di Nahir Miguel.*

Sì, quella è una casa vera di Mompòx. Tutte le case, tutti i posti sono veri.

*- Chi erano gli attori previsti al tempo del Gaumont Italia?*

La Muti l'ho scelto dal primo momento. Mi ha sempre convinto



per questa ambiguità che ha. Può sembrare una giovanissima, ma allo stesso tempo ha uno sguardo di donna, molto profondo, ambiguo, misterioso anche, e molto femminile. Poi bisogna pensare che io avrei dovuto invecchiare il personaggio di 27 anni! Quindi con la Muti mi era più possibile farlo. Ho scelto subito Anthony Delon. Al tempo del Gaumont avevo già scelto Volonté. Poi tutti gli altri attori, li ho trovati man mano che sono andati avanti nelle ricerche.

Il personaggio di Bayardó San Román, che è questo straniero che viene da fuori, è il personaggio più letterario del libro. Ha molti soldi e non si sa perché. È uno straniero ma non si sa da dove viene. Va in giro per tutti i Caraibi cercando una moglie. Quando s'innamora della ragazza è perché s'innamora dell'amore. Poi in effetti s'innamora realmente di quella ragazza, ma la prima cosa che fa, la compra. È un personaggio molto difficile. Io ho dovuto passare molto tempo per poter definirlo bene. Siccome una delle caratteristiche dei Caraibi è il cosmopolitismo, specialmente sulla costa della Colombia, non è un fatto straordinario che arrivi un ragazzo di lingua inglese...

*- Allora, non era la presenza del Virgin Films ad influenzare la sua scelta!?*

No, no, no! Sono andato al cinema una volta a Roma. Ho visto questo film, Dance with a Stranger, e mi ha interessato molto Rupert Everett. E l'ho preso. Io non scelgo mai gli attori in base ad un criterio di box office oppure in base alle richieste dei produttori, mai. Non è mai avvenuto questo nei miei film. Io scelgo gli attori quando sono convinto che quel personaggio, che quel attore, corrisponde al personaggio come

io lo vedo. Ora il personaggio di Bayardo San Román se io lo avesse visto solamente come un uomo del sud - messicano per esempio (pertanto un messicano può essere uno straniero per quei posti) - con una virilità accentuata per cui avrebbe magari rifiutata poi la ragazza già disonorata solamente per virilità offesa, sarebbe stato troppo semplice. Invece, quel personaggio lì, quando si presenta, bisogna pensare che si presenta la morte.

E un personaggio enigmatico e deve arrivare attraverso una possibilità di leggerlo a varie livelli. Infatti io l'ho considerato come un "enfant gâté" - per questo ho messo che il padre gli porta la jaguar. Va in giro per tutte le isole per cercarsi una moglie. La scelta di quella donna è un po' come la costruzione di una donna che gli vada bene. Al momento in cui si accorge che questa donna non appartiene solamente a lui ma che ha già appartenuto a qualcun d'altro, e come se gli avessero rotto tra le mani questa splendida costruzione che lui aveva fatto - e che lui aveva addirittura comprato.

Allora, questa rottura si capisce che provoca una reazione così assurda, che si chiude in casa e vuole morire, che si ubbriaca. E una reazione molto romantica. E un personaggio molto romantico questo, così com'è descritto nel libro, così come l'ho fatto io. Uno che poi aspetta 27 anni, riceve lettere, non le apre mai, però ritorna a riprendersi quella donna che lo ha aspettato anche lei, amandolo, e ha scritto lettere per 27 anni... Accetto che si parla di melodramma, perché no!

- *Una situazione fuori del comune!*

Certo, fuori del comune! Sono passioni accentuati.

- *E sua figlia è stata molto brava!*

Sì, non è male, è carina! E un piccolo ruolo, però, per uno che l'ha fatto per la prima volta, mi pare che ha espressa una certa personalità...

- *Nel libro la sequenza tra Flora Miguel e Santiago Nasar non prendeva molto tempo...*

No, ma neanche nel film, non prende molto tempo. Quindi, la necessità è di presentare un personaggio e fare capire subito al pubblico di chi si tratta, che carattere ha quel personaggio. Non è lo sviluppo psicologico che mi interessa. I personaggi sono emblematici.

Ho scelto Anthony Delon perché ho sempre creduto che, vedendolo, si può capire subito che è un ragazzo che da una parte può avere l'arroganza del privilegio che gli deriva dal essere bello e desiderato da tutti, ma allo stesso tempo ha anche una certa fragilità che gli deriva dal fatto che è un ragazzo che vive solo in mezzo delle donne, in una casa dove è molto protetto, dove ha ereditato l'immagine del padre che era un conquistatore di donne, ecc. Questo ragazzo deve esprimere da una parte l'arroganza e dall'altra la fragilità.

- *C'è anche Lucia Bosé.*

Sì, che è una madre che vive ormai come se fosse morta.

- *Vive attraverso il figlio?*

Ma, vive del ricordo del marito, ma come se fosse morta in quella casa. Non poteva fare una madre molto passionale, molta accesa, perché è una madre come già morta.

- *Irene Papas?*

Subito Irene Papas. Ha già lavorato con me in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli. Ha proprio la faccia, la personalità di una



madre che a un certo punto se gli succede una cosa come quella che succede nel film, la prima cosa alla quale pensa è la vendetta, e di lavare con il sangue questa offesa che è stata portata a tutta la famiglia, non solamente a sua figlia...

*- Ha avuto difficoltà con il techniscope?*

Difficoltà no, però ci vuole attenzione perché bisogna inquadrare sia pensando al "full frame", all'immagine intera, sia pensando a quando il film viene ridotto per il passaggio in televisione.

*- Per esempio, ho trovato effettiva la sequenza dove i due amanti sono a lati opposti della barca...*

Nel libro, quello è un piccolo momento ... Siccome un giorno sono andato in giro a esplorare un poco il fiume, sono capitato in questo canale dove sono stato colpito dalla quantità enorme degli uccelli che si alzavano in volo al passaggio della mia barca... una favola! Allora, mi ha talmente colpito che ho pensato che i silenzi tra quei due che fanno questa passeggiata senza parlarsi potessero esser riempiti dalla natura...

C'è stato un critico francese che ha detto che era come fare la pubblicità al Club Méditerranée! Ma io trovo una cosa così stupida dire una sciocchezza del genere! Oppure che il sole che tramonta è come la pubblicità del nescafé! Ma se oggi la pubblicità prende dal cinematografo quello che il cinematografo ha sempre fatto, non per questo bisogna abbandonare il linguaggio del cinema... se mi dà un'emozione. Oppure non vedo per quale motivo io dovrei rinunciare a ricorrere alla "ralenti" per far capire che è un sogno perché oggi nella pubblicità il "ralenti" si adopera spesso. Ma sono

osservazioni, secondo me, abbastanza rozze, che io non condivido in una maniera più assoluta.

- *Ma il "ralenti", si può utilizzarlo diversamente. E un cliché ma...*

Ma appartiene al linguaggio del cinematografo...

- *Nei suoi film ci sono sempre queste inquadrature che io definisco come "architettureali"...*

Sì, è naturale, perché la costruzione di un'opera d'arte è come l'architettura... E una questione di equilibrio tra gli spazi, i volumi, i disegni, nelle distanze e, secondo me, è un'architettura il film.

- *Per esempio, in Cadaveri eccellenti, ci sono questi edifici straordinari, che esprimono qualche cosa delle istituzioni...*

Esattamente. Ho costruito la scenografia di Cadaveri eccellenti attraverso molte città italiane; ho scelto Napoli, Palermo, Lecce, Siculiana vicino a Palermo, Agrigento - principalmente perché in questi posti ho trovato alcuni elementi scenografici che appartenevano tutti allo stesso clima, cioè all'architettura barocca della fine del seicento dei primi del settecento, con la dilatazione delle proporzioni che mi serviva per dilatare la realtà. Avevo bisogno di una realtà metafisica per quel film, non individuabile fisicamente in una città precisa. Dovevo parlare dell'Italia, ma dovevo parlare di un'Italia che corrispondeva ad una interpretazione un po' metafisica della realtà. Quindi, ho unito scenografie diverse componendo una geografia ideale in Italia.

- *Per esempio, quell'archivio siciliano?*

Certo. Ha queste proporzioni enormi che sono come le proporzioni enormi delle scalinate delle palazze delle istituzioni, oppure delle piazze. La piazza dove avviene il

primo funerale, che è la piazza San Domenico Maggiore di Napoli, ha delle proporzioni vaste; ha questo obelisco barocco bellissimo al centro della piazza. Gli interni delle chiese... sono tutte delle proporzioni un po' al di fuori del normale, e attraverso questi proporzioni ho cercato di dare l'impressione al pubblico di trovarsi in una dimensione un po' metafisica.

Ora, anche in questo film i luoghi sono scelti per cercare di interpretare la realtà con una leggera dilatazione rispetto alla realtà quotidiana.

*- e dicono qualcosa sui poteri che li hanno costruiti?*

Sì, le proporzioni di quel fiume, le proporzioni della piazza, le case... Gli interni delle case dei Caraibi colpiscono per gli spazi enormi che hanno. Non avendo l'aria condizionata, naturalmente, per difendersi dal caldo le costruivano con dei grandi spazi per dare una ventilazione, e in queste grandi stanze non ci sono mobili; ci sono semplicemente delle sedie... Ed è già un'immagine un po' metafisica. E realistica, ma allo stesso tempo è di una realtà un po' allucinata.

*- Può parlare un po' della produzione?*

Questo film è stato una lunga avventura perché è nato prima con certi produttori giovani che dovevano farlo per conto della Gaumont. Poi la Gaumont in Italia ha avuto un crollo, e questi produttori hanno cercato di portarlo avanti, ma hanno avuto delle difficoltà, sebbene già ci fossero degli elementi finanziari già raccolte intorno ad un progetto che avrei dovuto fare io. Potevo fare quel film o un'altro film, ma già gli Enti, l'Istituto Luce e la RAI, erano disposti a



partecipare in questa, ma non bastava. Allora io, per un anno, ho sospeso il film... e mi sono occupato di altro. Poi è venuto un'altro produttore, Yves Gasser, che ha ripreso il progetto. A quel punto c'era anche un'altro aiuto del Ministero della Cultura Francese. Ma tutto questo non bastava perché ci volevano dei capitali. Quindi Yves Gasser ha trovato un socio, Francis von Büren, che si è assunto la responsabilità finanziaria di tutto il film... E un film che si è trascinato dietro come peso finanziario già tutto quello che ho detto che c'era prima - e sono dei costi che sono diventati dei costi morti, ma che hanno aumentato il costo finale del del film.

*- Come i diritti d'autore?*

Tutto! Tante coste! La preparazione che poi non è stata una preparazione vera e propria. La preparazione l'ho fatto dopo quando il film si è deciso. Prima c'è stata una preparazione per modo di vivere, voglio dire. Io sono andato subito in Colombia, ho scelto già i posti a Mompòx e Cartagena. Poi ho mandato il mio architetto per continuare una ricerca perché non volevo costruire la piazza... ma non l'ha trovata perché non c'erano delle piazze come quelle che servivano a me. Allora abbiamo deciso di rifare la piazza, come abbiamo dovuto ricostruire il battello a ruote per esempio... Abbiamo cominciato a prepararle solamente quando il film è diventato un progetto che si sapeva con sicurezza di poterlo realizzare.

*- Von Büren ha venduto il film in avanza alle reti televisive?*

Sì, ad alcune che si fanno normalmente. Oggi le vendite alle televisioni costituiscono una buona parte del recupero dei film.

- *Per una coproduzione, dev'essere complicato il sistema con i cambiali. Sono i governi a mettere i garantiti per poter cominciare a girare?*

No. Le garanzie si cercano attraverso delle banche. Non c'entrano i governi.

- *Possiamo parlare adesso della sceneggiatura che lei ha fatto con Tonino Guerra. Lavora con lui da molti anni...*

Sì, da C'era una volta in poi.

- *E la divisione del lavoro - si può definirlo?*

Facilmente. Noi lavoriamo assieme e lavoriamo anche ognuno per conto proprio. Io dico le mie idee. Dico come vedo il film. Tonino entra in discussione con me.

- *Mi pare che ci sia un vuoto e critico e produttivo nel cinema italiano in questo momento. E un periodo di crisi, una polarizzazione di produzione a causa dei costi enormi.*

Bisogna dire una cosa. In Italia, subito dopo la guerra, il cinema è stato il mezzo più diretto e più alto per rappresentare la realtà italiana, una realtà che apparteneva ad un paese che usciva fuori da una distruzione, sia morale che fisica. Tutto il paese sperava naturalmente di ricostruirsi, di ricostruire la propria identità morale e fisica. E venuto fuori il neorealismo... Poi è venuto fuori un'altro periodo che è stato quello del realismo critico, che ha cominciato a fare degli analisi dei fatti. Molti critici, non solamente italiani... fanno coincidere l'inizio di questo realismo critico con il mio film, Salvatore Giuliano.

Quasi tutti i miei film sono praticamente un tentativo di mettere in relazione le cause con gli effetti e cercare di interpretare alcuni episodi della vita pubblica italiana, per cercare di capire quello che avveniva. Sono stati dei film certamente con una intenzione di esprimere in un'ottica

politica quello che avveniva.

Ora adesso che sono passati trent'anni, la realtà italiana si è modificata. Non c'è più il terzo mondo in Italia come c'era trent'anni fa. Le condizioni di vita delle persone si sono molto modificate. C'è un livello medio di vita in Italia che assomiglia molto al livello medio degli altri paesi europei, mentre prima questo non c'era.

Con questa evoluzione si è modificata anche il rapporto tra alcuni fatti... come il rapporto tra le istituzioni, tra la politica e i poteri economici, i poteri anche criminali, i poteri mafiosi, i poteri della camorra. Tutte queste cose mentre fino a pochi anni fa avevano bisogno di essere denunciate con violenza... adesso c'è bisogno di una riflessione, perché malgrado le denuncie, certe cose non sono cambiate come si sperava che cambiassero.

Mentre ieri la mafia e la camorra erano più chiaramente individuabili perché il mafioso era fisicamente riconoscibile, oggi ormai la mafia si nasconde dietro la legalità. Quindi non basta più la denuncia. Oggi i film di mafia in Italia rischiano e stanno diventando un genere, una moda.

Ho l'impressione che tutto questo tolga la drammaticità vera della situazione. Bisogna andare al di là di quello che è già stata fatto. Però c'è bisogno di riproporre gli argomenti secondo un'ottica diversa, che non sempre è quella giusta per il cinematografo perché ha bisogno di fatti chiari e precisi. Io nei miei film ho denunciato tutto quello che ho potuto denunciare - alcuni sono ancora validi oggi... Non voglio dire che oggi quei film non vi possono più fare.

Certamente oggi il cinema non è più quello di una volta. Una



volta il cinema costava molto di meno farlo. Allora anche la scelta degli argomenti diventa più difficile, perché devono essere argomenti internazionali. Devono essere capiti in tutto il mondo. Oggi c'è la tendenza di girare i film anche in inglese, perché possono essere venduti in tutto il mondo. Questa è già una limitazione. Allora i film che costano il costo medio possibile naturalmente devono corrispondere, per il mercato nazionale, a certi argomenti che secondo i produttori e i distributori sono quelli che hanno la sicurezza di poter avere l'interesse e la visione del pubblico italiano. Ecco perché si fanno molte commedie, molti film erotici, comici... Si devono coprire con il mercato nazionale. Una volta si coprivano con il mercato nazionale anche film di attacco, di denuncia, ma erano film che costavano poco...

*- Ma esistono reti di distribuzione per film più seri, più politici - i cinema d'essai...?*

Sì, ma non è una questione delle reti di distribuzione. La questione è i soldi che si vogliono per fare un film oggi. I film politici non hanno l'appoggio dei produttori in Italia. Non l'hanno mai avuto, bisogna dire la verità!

Quando ho fatto alcuni film più dichiaratamente politici mi sentivo accusato di fare dei film che non erano film (come Le mani sulla città)...

*- E ha avuto un successo con il pubblico.*

Appunto. Però, sono stati film che sono stati combattuti in Italia, come sarebbero ancora certi film politici fatti con rigore. Non sono combattuti i film con contenuti politici ma che in effetti oggi non corrispondono più a un film politico - dei film di genere sulla mafia, sulla camorra. Non sono più

dei film che svolgono un discorso rigoroso da un certo punto di vista sociale e politico.

*- E questo vuoto in Italia è perché è difficile cominciare per registi nuovi?*

Credo di sì. Per i registi giovani è molto più facile cominciare con dei film comici, dei film erotici, perché trovano facilmente la copertura finanziaria da parte dei produttori. Naturalmente uno che deve cominciare non sempre ha voglia di aspettare l'occasione giusta. E non sempre è capace di sottrarsi alla lusinga dell'immediato successo. Quindi ecco che molti giovani pur di fare immediatamente, preferiscono fare quei soggetti che naturalmente danno le garanzie ai produttori e ai distributori di poter riprendere i soldi da un mercato nazionale.

*- Aveva considerato la possibilità di lavorare con la RAI?*

Ma lavorare con la RAI non significa avere le garanzie per poter fare certi film piuttosto che altri. La RAI partecipa alla produzione dei film anticipando, no, assicurando di comperare il film per andare in giro attraverso la televisione. Molte volte la RAI, con questi tipi di contratti fa degli affari molto conveniente per la RAI, perché partecipa - non è che finanzia il film la RAI. La RAI finanzia delle produzioni per la RAI dalle quali poi si può tirare fuori anche un film. Sono due cose diverse, perché un film nato per avere quattro, cinque puntate per la RAI, difficilmente poi può diventare un film di un'ora e quarantacinque per il cinematografo. Quando ho fatto Eboli, avevo immaginato due cose diverse, una per la televisione e una per il cinema. Nella televisione c'è un'ora che non era considerata per il

film.

- *E nel mondo della televisione c'è il Signor Berlusconi!*

Credo che non sarà facile nel futuro non tenere presente la realtà della televisione commerciale.

- *E più facile con questa nuova legge cinematografica?*

Ma la legge non è stata fatta praticamente. Si deve ancora fare una legge che regoli bene i rapporti tra il cinema e la televisione. Noi vediamo i nostri film passare per le televisioni, sia quelli con interruzione per la pubblicità, senza che noi abbiamo il diritto di partecipare a nulla. Quindi stiamo cercando adesso come associazione degli autori di ottenere un riconoscimento del diritto d'autore.

- *Ho visto il suo Uomini contro alla televisione italiana, canale cinque, credo, di Berlusconi - e neanche finiti i titoli di testa, c'erano spot pubblicitari!*

Infatti lei adesso mi da notizia e mi occuperò! Ho visto il mio film Mattei interrotto dalla pubblicità in una televisione privata. Mi sono informato e lo ha data la RAI in sub-licenza, il che è un'assurdità perché se io ho fatto un film e l'ho dato alla RAI (o comunque il produttore l'ha dato alla RAI) sono stato sicuro di essere protetto da quella cessione alla RAI perché la RAI non fa interruzioni. Non ha più significato che io ho fatto causa come ho fatto alle reti private perché massacrano i miei film con delle interruzioni. Diventa una beffa se poi è la RAI che li cede. Questa giungla in Italia dev'essere disciplinata.

... Eppure bisognerebbe tener conto di un fatto, che quando, trent'anni fa, noi facevamo dei contratti in cui cedevamo i diritti per il futuro e per qualsiasi mezzo di espressione (che già sono delle formule che non dovrebbero essere ammesse



in un contratto...) allora la televisione non era una realtà com'è diventata oggi. Però, chi si avvantaggia di questa nuova realtà è solamente il produttore. Non è giusto...

*- La legge è indietro della tecnologia. Noi possiamo prendere il suo film in videocassetta...*

E infatti è quello che avviene in Italia. Pensi che io non ho preso una lira di Uomini contro perché l'ho coprodotto. C'ho messo tutta la mia paga dentro al film. Non ho preso un soldo, per poter fare il film come l'ho voluto fare io. E non ho avuto una difesa.

*- E un bellissimo film.*

Sì, è uno dei miei migliori film.

*- Ma non è stato distribuito bene?*

E un pasticcio, come per tanti film. Oggi un film, anche un vecchio film è diventato una grande possibilità di ricchezza per chi ne è proprietario, ma credo che sono molto pochi gli autori di film che potevano essere il proprietario del proprio film. Credo nessuno.

*- Anche noi adesso abbiamo delle difficoltà a mostrare certi film perché (per esempio nel caso di film di Fellini) dopo un certo tempo i diritti tornano al produttore, alla casa di produzione.*

Non vanno all'autore però, glielo dico io! E questa è una cosa assurda.

*- E in Italia, quando si faceva un film, si formava una compagnia per fare quel film, e dopo la compagnia cessava di essere. Chi ha i diritti?*

E molto difficile capire chi ha i diritti di un film, perché vendite, altre vendite, vendite parziali, vendite totali, vendite per pochi anni, vendite per molti anni - è una giungla!

## APPENDIX FOUR

ROSI AND HIS COLLABORATORS

Given the collaborative nature of film production it is, of course, difficult to say that one person (and no-one else) was responsible for what appears on the screen at any given moment. The following assessments may suggest characteristics which have some presence in Rosi's films.

1. SCREENWRITERS

As I have mentioned, Rosi works consistently with the same collaborators. He generally co-scripts all his films, working with Suso Cecchi D'Amico on La sfida, I magliari, Salvatore Giuliano; Enzo Provenzale on La sfida, Salvatore Giuliano, Le mani sulla città; Raffaele La Capria on Le mani sulla città, C'era una volta, Diario Napoletano; and Tonino Guerra on every feature film since C'era una volta.<sup>1</sup>

Suso Cecchi D'Amico

Suso Cecchi D'Amico is the doyenne of Italian screen-writers whose career dates from 1946. She was the daughter of the writer Emilio Cecchi who worked with the Cines company before and during the war. She started as a script editor and then moved onto writing, claiming to have worked best with Antonioni, Monicelli, Comencini, Bolognini. She is remembered for her collaboration on all of Visconti's films, having met him during the filming of Ossessione in 1942-3.<sup>2</sup>

To the surprise of those who like to categorise, she has worked right across the spectrum of the industry, from art films to soft porn.<sup>3</sup> Yet, if Perrella's thesis were to operate, she would present a consistent box office profile, ie. her work would fall into a definable niche artistically

and in terms of its economic reward. This is however not the case. The box office returns of the hundreds of films upon which she has worked have not been constant. For example, in 1951, she worked on Camerini's Due mogli sono troppe (Lire 29.193.201) and Visconti's Bellissima (L 160.096.543); and in 1958 Rosi's La sfida (L 496.281.739) and Monicelli's enormously successful I soliti ignoti (L 901.562.153). Nor have they had a consistent genre profile, moving across the range of social dramas, fantasies, romances, historical dramas, comedies, political thrillers, episodic films, love stories, dramas, art films, melodramas, adventures. She was, however, associated with the best known of neorealist films - Roma città aperta, Ladri di biciclette, Miracolo a Milano. Analysis of her films' returns allows one to say that they are usually profitable, regularly mega hits and constant successes. Box office successes have clustered in the comedy and social drama (including Rosi's La sfida, I magliari and Salvatore Giuliano) categories. Upon close inspection we see that she has consistently (every other year) worked with art film directors and on films which have won prizes, eg. Miracolo a Milano, Prima Comunione, Bellissima, Processo alla città, Senso, Le amiche, La sfida, I soliti ignoti, I magliari, Rocco e i suoi fratelli, Salvatore Giuliano, Il gattopardo.

She would have come into contact with Rosi when they both worked on Visconti's La terra trema<sup>4</sup>. During his 'apprenticeship' they worked together on Bellissima (1951), Processo alla città (Zampa, 1952), I vinti (Antonioni, 1953), Senso (Visconti, 1954), Proibito (Monicelli, 1954) and Kean



(Gassman/Rosi, 1957). Although her filmography shows a constant succession of two to five projects per year since the beginning of the 1950s, she claims that the 1950s were very hard financially. She worked as an occasional interpreter and teacher, and later for the production company, Film Costellazione, doing rewrites. Italian film scripts are collaborative ventures and it is often the case that a name on the credits represents but a small part of the work. Suso Cecchi mentions, for example, working with Fellini on the scalletta for Lattuada's Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo (1947)<sup>5</sup> and with De Sica and Zavattini where she took care of the construction of the plot, and they concerned themselves with details. Visconti shared her love of solid construction, but she also wrote characters, and Simone in Rocco e i suoi fratelli is hers. An interesting early collaboration with Rosi could have been Zampa's political drama, Processo alla città, but in fact Suso Cecchi D'Amico received a detailed treatment covering a couple of pages from Rosi, and wrote the screenplay from there.

Rosi claims to have learnt the art of writing a screenplay from her and Sergio Amidei, characterizing her contribution as insistence on the scalletta.<sup>6</sup> The scalletta is the skeleton of a screenplay, the basic structure upon which the characters and events are hung. She would force Rosi to identify what he wanted to say, before writing a scene. She worked with him gathering stories in Germany, Naples, Sicily and Rome for these early films so that dialogues would have the feel of authenticity and the flavour of a period and situation. More importantly, she describes studying the Viterbo court

records in Rome and how this documentation structured the screenplay:-

"Non so neppure come ci siamo riusciti a pescare nei fascicoli quello che ci serviva: era inutile affezionarsi a un'idea, se non era dimostrabile non si poteva usarla. Il fatto di dover andare a pescare tutte le possibili fonti della documentazione processuale ha dettato un po' la costruzione del film. Quando poi abbiamo avuto dei ricorsi da parte di due ergastolani, abbiamo vinto. Sulla struttura del film ha certamente influito il fatto di non poter inventare passaggi, di sapere che dovevamo porci dei limiti."

Suso Cecchi D'Amico continues to work as a highly paid writer but not, since Salvatore Giuliano on Rosi's films, claiming in a BBC radio interview that his recent films are not the right choice for him.<sup>8</sup> She considers that Rosi needs large, grand themes in order to match his mise en scène.

### Tonino Guerra

Besides being a well-known screenwriter, Tonino Guerra is also a dialect poet and an artist. His screenwriting career dates from 1956 when Elio Petri and Glauco Casadio came to Sant'Arcangelo where he was teaching and invited him to collaborate on Un ettaro di cielo in creating the reality of peasant life. His career can be seen to observe a similar pattern to that of Suso Cecchi D'Amico. He too has worked across the genre spectrum - adventures, comedies, social dramas, psychological dramas, episodic films, fables, science fiction, war, detective and erotic films. However, analysis of box office returns shows that, although his early films have modest financial rewards, he works with 'quality' directors such as De Santis, Petri, Antonioni, the Taviani brothers, on films which win prizes for their quality. With the very occasional exception, since 1963 he has had consistent box

office successes, and his work can be categorised more often than not as art cinema. The films on which he has worked have consistently won prizes and he himself has been distinguished by a book devoted to his career.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from his working on projects with other of Rosi's collaborators, Gianni di Venanzo, Jolanda Benvenuti etc, it appears that the producer Carlo Ponti brought he and Rosi together for C'era una volta. He has co-scripted all Rosi's films since then.

Gian Luigi Rondi<sup>10</sup> claims that his gift is to analyse psychological motivation, feelings and intelligence a luce fredda and that it is his rigorous approach which transforms Fellini's highly subjective "io" into a distanced "io" on the literary model. His approach is described as eclectic:-

"La sua filmografia può essere letto in modo sincronico, cioè sulla base della sua abilità a sintonizzarsi con l'ultimo realismo socialista o col cinema dell'alienazione, con la nostrana nouvelle vague o con la commedia all'italiana, con la novellistica disimpegnata o con il cinema politico, con il regionalismo o con il cosmopolitismo, con un grande regista sempre più esangue o con un altro grande regista sempre più sanguigno, con la favola o con la Storia, col modulo televisivo o con quello che alle limitazioni televisive si oppone, con il cinema per happy few o con quello internazionale e multimediale. Ma la stessa filmografia può anche essere vista in modo diacronico, cioè proprio come fatto linguistico che si sviluppa nel corso del tempo, che ora trova maggiori spazi inventivi, ora gioca soltanto sulle strutture narrative, ora si limita a una sorte di intervento tecnico, ma pur sempre reca l'impronta di quel nome che compare sui titoli di testa e che è sufficiente, per gli spettatori critici più avvertiti, a trasmettere un segnale."<sup>11</sup>

Guerra, for his part, claims that his contribution is to the structure of the film and to the rhythm and pace of the story<sup>12</sup>. Perhaps a clue to his collaboration with Rosi lies



in Marco De Sant's comparison of Guerra's pastels to haiku, poetic pictures of apparent simplicity but which are, in effect figurative metaphors whose interpretation transcends the confines of the frame.<sup>13</sup> In this way his pastels resemble his poetry and his other writing. Guerra himself states that:-

"Io ho sempre cercato di esprimermi con le parole, anche se capisco e vedo che il mondo ormai va avanti con gli occhi, guarda. La parola è un modo di guardare più nascosto e più misterioso, e io sono nato per la parola. Ma sono sempre stato legato alle immagini, e ho sempre tentato, attraverso la parola, di fare in modo che chi legge possa inventare delle immagini."<sup>14</sup>

His collaboration would thus appear to operate at two levels. On the practical side that of reducing mounds of documentation to a form that can be easily assimilated by the viewer and, on the poetic side, to contributing to the allusive and metaphoric content of words and images. Both complement Rosi's own tendencies to sift and structure, most notably in his heavily researched films such as Il caso Mattei and Lucky Luciano, but also in his adaptations where the essence of one artistic mode has to undergo transformation into filmic form. As we have explored, this transformation essentially results in a very dense mise en scène, where the arrangement of the visual elements, the dialogue and sound track, are all highly charged with meaning.

Rosi himself describes his way of working with Guerra as a synthesis:-

"In fase di sceneggiatura, con Guerra succede che - anche se proveniamo da ambienti diversi ma entrambi interessati al mondo contadino e alla sua cultura - le esperienze e le provenienze culturali si unificano e si identificano, perché i valori sono sempre universali. ... Nello scrivere una

sceneggiatura, quando due persone stanno insieme come stiamo insieme io e Tonino ... dalla raccolta dei materiali in poi, con uno scambio continuo di esperienze, diventa molto difficile dire a chi si deve questa o quella cosa del film."<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless certain specific contributions of Guerra are documented - the traces of magic and fantasy remaining in C'era una volta, the process of synthesizing minor character elements in Lussu's book and in foregrounding the book's political position in Uomini contro. More recently his concern with the validation of peasant culture has resulted in some of the ideas present in his poems finding their way into screenplay. For example, the idea that peasant civilisation produces complete unitary persons with access to knowledge systems necessary for survival, eg the father in Tre fratelli with his knowledge of the stars; the idea of the death of the mother representing the loss of a peasant culture which is not valued<sup>16</sup>; the elaboration of surreal and magical elements in peasant existence in Cristo si è fermato a Eboli; specific scenes in Tre fratelli - the rabbit afraid of dying, the arrival of the US tanks in Rocco's memories, and the lost wedding ring.<sup>17</sup>

From two or three film projects a year, Tonino Guerra now works less, having established his reputation. Besides working regularly with directors who take him with them as part of the package to a producer<sup>18</sup>, he also chooses to write for new directors from time to time. Thus, viewing his career synchronically, we see that, initially, a producer was instrumental in packaging him with a director, but that, subsequently, alliances of personal friendship made him part of a director's package. A diachronic look at his career in

the context of the Italian film industry shows that he has consistently worked at the quality end of the industry, either with art film directors or on box office successes which won prizes. Reputation established, he fits quite neatly into the director + screenwriter category of Perrella's direction-function.

### Raffaele La Capria

Raffaele La Capria co-wrote Le mani sulla città, C'era una volta, Uomini contro and Diario Napoletano. He differs from Rosi's main co-writers in that he and Rosi have been personal friends since the age of ten. The influential Neapolitan peer group also included the director, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, who suggested Rosi to Visconti as an assistant director on La terra trema. La Capria is a writer and novelist. He suggested the idea of a film about the collapse of a building to Rosi after Salvatore Giuliano.

## 2. DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

### Gianni Di Venanzo

Gianni Di Venanzo trained at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia and started his career in the early 1940s as assistant to several directors of photography. He worked on Osessione, René Clair's La beauté du diable, Rossellini's Roma città aperta and as assistant to the great G R Aldo on Visconti's La terra trema. Gianni di Venanzo was the camera operator and Rosi would have got to know him well as it was one of Rosi's jobs to keep the 'bollettino' or shooting record:-

"... cioè la memoria degli obiettivi adoperati per una inquadratura, le distanze focali, i movimenti di macchina, l'altezza della stessa, il metraggio di



negativo girato, le annotazioni. Le annotazioni consistevano nella descrizione precisa di tutto quanto accadeva intorno alla macchina da presa, dalle condizioni atmosferiche, sole, pioggia, passaggio nuvole, ombre, ecc., a quelle dei rumori e suoni..."<sup>19</sup>

Di Venanzo's name is associated with some of the great neorealist films - Roma città aperta, Paisà, Giuseppe De Santis' Caccia tragica, De Sica's Miracolo a Milano, Lizzani's Achtung banditi. It is therefore not surprising that, although his work spans a wide range of genres, it clusters most heavily around social drama, psychological drama and comedy, including one of the first enormous comedy successes of the late 1950s, I soliti ignoti. About one third of his career was associated with art cinema directors - Antonioni, Rosi, Fellini, Wertmuller, Losey, besides the neorealists. Some of these films, such as Rosi's and Fellini's were also financially successful, ensuring that successful teams were assembled for subsequent, similar projects. By far the most interesting aspect of a career such as Di Venanzo's lie in the implications for the realistic look of Italian comedy if films were lit and photographed by a director of photography formed in neorealist filmmaking. Rosi, however, claimed that Di Venanzo produced a different look for different directors, willingly making experiments. Rosi's method was to tell the film to him rather than letting him read the screenplay, so that he absorbed the climate and atmosphere of a film and developed ideas on how to film it.<sup>20</sup> Di Venanzo himself described their mode of working thus:-

"In genere l'impostazione anche fotografica di un film la dà il regista, il quale cerca di esporre nella maniera più chiara possibile all'operatore quello che desidera. Franco Rosi, per esempio, mi

mostra addirittura delle fotografie per indicarmi quello che vuole che io inquadri e il modo, il tono fotografico che desidera. Con Fellini le cose sono un pochino più difficile."<sup>21</sup>

His style has been defined as a taste for a brightly lit, gleaming frame, at the same time functional and analytical, in the use of lighting to reveal elements of the composition to the spectator.<sup>22</sup>

It would be difficult to assign a 'worth' to him on the basis of the box office returns of the films on which he worked. These are very inconsistent. He worked on between two and five films per year. His art films consistently won prizes, but were not necessarily financially successful.

#### Pasqualino De Santis

A quite different career pattern can be seen in the work of Pasqualino De Santis, perhaps because, as Lorenzo Codelli suggested<sup>23</sup>, he has had the advantage (unlike Di Venanzo) of working in a period of heavy film investment, expansion in the Italian industry and correspondingly easy access to technological advances. Pasqualino De Santis is the younger brother of the director, Giuseppe De Santis. After graduating from the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in 1948, he started work immediately on his brother's film Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi, as assistant to Piero Portalupi. However, his apprenticeship was the traditional long one of working as a 'gofer', then camera operator for master directors of photography, mainly for Portalupi and Gianni Di Venanzo, with whom he worked for seven years. He met Rosi when Rosi was Visconti's Assistant Director, and De Santis was Assistant Cameraman on Bellissima. His first film as camera operator

was on Rosi's Salvatore Giuliano but it was on Il momento della verità that he gradually took over from Di Venanzo. His official debut was on C'era una volta. Di Venanzo died that year and De Santis has acted as Director of Photography for Rosi ever since. He attributes his technical skills to Portalupi, his ability to experiment to Di Venanzo and his best work to Rosi, who has always encouraged experimentation. Because he has known Rosi for so long:-

"... discutiamo sempre a lungo su come realizzare le idee scritte in sceneggiatura, con che obiettivo girare i primi piani, ad esempio, o che tono cromatico dare al film, ...  
... d'altra parte con Rosi si fanno sempre dei provini molto accurati. E tutto il lavoro di preparazione che è lungo con lui, a partire dai sopralluoghi; spesso si torna addirittura più volte nello stesso posto prima di decidere. Non a caso quando faccio un film con Rosi vengo messo sotto contratto due mesi prima dell'inizio delle riprese..."<sup>24</sup>

He thus works closely with Rosi to decide on the tonality and look of his films. From published interviews it appears that his own interests, which he has worked through on his various film projects, are in dealing with complex light sources, particularly reflected light, with using colour as if it were black and white and with "des perspectives longues et hyperthéâtrales... qui de la même façon couvrirait en un seul plan plusieurs milieux, plusieurs vies contemporaines mais antithétiques..."<sup>25</sup> The latter ability is bound up with a very European style of filmmaking, ie. a preference for the plan séquence or long take. Here the camera moves to explore the actors' relationship to each other and to diegetic space, rather than have diegetic space inferred through use of editing in the US style. It is interesting that De Santis has



developed his mastery in photographing space and movement working for directors such as Visconti (who learned it from Jean Renoir), and Rosi, attesting to the continuity and passing down of skills in the industry. It would make him highly suited to Rosi's preoccupation with space, depth of field and architectural volumes.

Pasqualino De Santis' career has included a narrower band of genre projects and of directors. Once his apprenticeship was over, he worked predominantly with art cinema directors on films which have had solid box office success. He now works on big, international, expensive projects, and is rumoured to require very large fees. De Santis has an Oscar (for Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet) and has been awarded the prestigious nastro d'argento for best photography several times. He also frequently shoots advertisements, eg. for Renault and Peugeot where seconds of film are given enormous budgets, technology and crews.

Like Tonino Guerra, he is part of the Rosi 'package' for a production. However, more typically at this stage of his career, he is in demand for expensive projects where his experience acts as a guarantee of quality, and (more importantly) of delivering the product efficiently and skillfully. He now works on few projects, but at very high fees.

### 3. EDITORS

With the exception of C'era una volta, when he used Jolanda Benvenuti, Rosi has worked with only two editors - Mario Serandrei until his death in 1965, and Ruggero Mastroianni thereafter.

Mario Serandrei

Mario Serandrei's career shows some similarities with that of Suso Cecchi D'Amico. He started on Visconti's Ossessione and worked consistently on all of Visconti's films. Apart from three neorealist films, the collective Giorni di gloria and De Santis' Caccia tragica, his work covered a very wide genre spectrum - historical and war dramas, melodrama, comedy, adventures, documentaries, love stories, satires, a horror film and a peplum epic, plus regular social dramas. Nearly all of his work has been for directors at the quality end of the industry and he was associated with a large number of prize-winning films. His work for Visconti, and his connection with the producer, Franco Cristaldi, would have placed him in a position where association with Rosi was logical. His collaboration with "un regista esigente" like Visconti and the volume of his work, gave him some status in the industry, but he complained about the lack of creative autonomy allowed to editors in Italy.<sup>26</sup>

Ruggero Mastroianni

Franco Cristaldi appears to be the connecting link between Rosi and Mastroianni, whose career since 1960 has been prolific. Mastroianni, like Rosi, was one of those who made their debut around 1958. He was a friend of Mario Serandrei, who suggested to Rosi that Mastroianni edit Salvatore Giuliano, although his name does not appear on the credits. Apart from Rosi's films, he has been editor on films of Petri, Brusati, Patroni Griffi, Wertmuller, Visconti (Gruppo di famiglia in un interno and Ludwig) and Fellini (Prova d'orchestra, La città delle donne, Ginger e Fred). These

films have often won prizes, but they have not been consistent box office successes.

Rosi has called him a very valued collaborator, with whom he works side by side but, typically, "... il n'y a pas un mètre de pellicule qui soit coupé ou collé sans mon accord."<sup>27</sup> Mastroianni starts his work by viewing all of the film shot on the moviola, to get an idea of the rhythm and how he will edit it. With Rosi, he starts editing directly after shooting has finished, starting with the first sequence to establish a rhythm of the work<sup>28</sup>.

Apart from directors with whom he has obviously established a working relationship, producers have been influential in bringing together editor and film project.

#### 4. MUSIC

For a director who works within the realist mode, such as Rosi, sound is an extremely important part of filmmaking. Rosi has worked with several different sound recordists but, since Il caso Mattei, most consistently with Mario Bramonti. As we have seen, the emotional and dramatic are also given full play in his films, using the full resources of the musical score to do this. He has worked with two musicians - Roman Vlad and Piero Piccioni.

#### Roman Vlad

Roman Vlad wrote the musical accompaniment for Kean and La Sfida. His link to Rosi would therefore have been through Franco Cristaldi, but he also worked for Luciano Emmer, with whom Rosi was also involved on Domenica d'agosto. He won a nastro d'argento for his career. By 1960, however, Piccioni was already more active, working on films which won more



prizes and did better financially and no relationship developed further with Vlad.

### Piero Piccioni

Apart from a set-back necessitating a change of name early on in his career<sup>29</sup>, Piero Piccioni has had an enormously prolific career. Jazz compositions typify his early film work but, from the late 1960s onwards he experimented with styles appropriate to the wide range of films with which he was involved. These have had mainly solid success at the box office and regularly won prizes. Salvatore Giuliano for instance gained him a nastro d'argento for best music. He established early relationships with important producers and production houses, such as Cristaldi, Carlo Ponti, De Laurentiis. His style is now more lyrical, but he works less since the early 1980s. Other musicians have surpassed him in popularity.

Rosi claims that he works with Piccioni as with his other collaborators - "Je ne leur confie jamais rien que je ne surveille de très près."<sup>30</sup>

### PRODUCTION DESIGNER

#### Andrea Crisanti

Head of the design functions on Rosi's films is Andrea Crisanti. Crisanti has worked with him on every film since Uomini contro, with the exception of Carmen where the theatrical talents of Enrico Job were necessary. Crisanti designs and builds the sets, studies the lighting and position of the sun for the best time to shoot. Rosi's films may give the impression of being shot in real locations, but in fact the sets are heavily constructed.<sup>31</sup>

## 6. PRODUCERS AND PRODUCTION HOUSES

Italian producers have just as much of an individual profile as Italian film directors. The films associated with the names of Carlo Ponti, Luigi De Laurentiis, Franco Cristaldi, Alberto Grimaldi, Mario and Vittorio Cecchi Gori are recognizably different. The production context of Rosi's films is discussed in Chapter 1, but consideration of the role of the producer would be profitable at this stage.

### Franco Cristaldi

One of the most influential forces for innovation in the postwar Italian film industry was Franco Cristaldi. He set up his own production company, Vides, at the end of 1946 and used it initially to make very low budget short advertisements, short news and feature items for the Settimana Incom programmes circulated to cinemas. This gave him the sound technical and organizational experience to make the move from Turin to Rome and to making feature films. Like Ponti and De Laurentiis, he started by working with the Lux distribution and co-production company; he later worked with Titanus. His moment came at that time in the late 1950s when economic and social forces combined to enable different films to be made and new talents to be used. His definition of his role then:-

"Je croyais, et je crois toujours, que la fonction d'un producteur au sens le plus noble du terme, comme opérateur culturel, c'est de stimuler un certain type de recherche, et pas seulement d'accepter passivement les propositions qui arrivent. Il faut donc chercher à "combiner" des films. A cette époque de grande ferveur du cinéma italien, nous avions tous le désir, l'envie, l'angoisse de la recherche; il y avait ces réalisateurs avec qui on avait parlé... on s'est lancés ensemble..."

Mais il faut se rappeler qu'il y avait un public cinq fois plus élevé que le public actuel..."

Not only directors, but actors have praised him for launching careers, offering training through Vides rather than in private schools.<sup>33</sup> He made virtues of necessity, for instance building expensive sets for one film, and reusing it for several others. This astuteness characterised his career. He took risks, and had only the occasional failure. Since 1958 the majority of his films showed solid box office returns, a steady stream of prizes for quality, and the occasional blockbuster. As with any career, the latter are important in maintaining financial impetus to projects by establishing entrepreneurial credibility. His support of Germi, Rosi, and in 1980, Maurizio Nichetti, were rewarded.

The films he produced cluster predominantly in the dramatic and comedy genres, with a foray into mythological adventures in the 60s. Cristaldi took advantage of co-production deals with other countries at a very early stage, building up useful networks of contacts in Europe, and latterly campaigned for tax shelter and other legislative arrangements to facilitate production in the face of competition from television, or even so that co-productions with television could more equitably take place.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps equally important was Cristaldi's professional role in bringing together combinations of creative personnel on films. Gianni Di Venanzo made 11 films for him, Roman Vlad, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Carlo Egidi (scenographer), Ruggero Mastroianni, Ajace Parolin (camera operator), Piero Piccioni, worked regularly on his productions, as did other, more minor, of Rosi's collaborators.



Alberto Grimaldi

Although only involved with the production of Cadaveri eccellenti, Alberto Grimaldi's career, like that of Cristaldi, has generally been at the quality end of the industry. A Neapolitan, he started as a media lawyer, specializing in work for the big US film distributors, Columbia and Twentieth Century Fox. Producing films started as a hobby. He founded PEA (Produzioni Europee Associate) as a family firm to take advantage of co-production opportunities, beginning with very low budget Italian westerns. Their success enabled him to make production his full-time business. Since then he has made 90 or so films, including award-winning films by Fellini, Pontecorvo, Pasolini, Bertolucci and Rosi. Although he has also had financial success with Italian art cinema, he sees the way forward in international terms:-

"... i costi dei film italiani non sono più amortizzabili con i proventi dal solo mercato italiano, e pertanto, non potendosi ovviamente abbassare i costi di produzione, bisogna puntare ai mercati mondiali, e non soltanto a quello italiano. Per far ciò occorre innanzitutto girare i film in lingua inglese, che è la lingua conosciuta nell'80% dei mercati mondiali di interesse finanziario, e quindi è indispensabile la collaborazione di autori e interpreti di lingua inglese."<sup>35</sup>

Such a prescient statement achieved the status of fact within five years. Rosi's later films, from Carmen onwards conform to these international imperatives.

Important as producers such a Grimaldi are, his collaboration with Rosi does not appear to have imposed new technical personnel on already established working relationships.

Gaumont

Gaumont has been an important force in the European film

industries growing from a family firm to an international operation practising vertical integration on a modern industrial model by integrating production, distribution and exhibition. By the 1970s, however it had moved from the production of 'family' cinema to more 'auteurist', art cinema projects, combining under the direction of Daniel Toscan du Plantier, art and commerce, where once the former category had been to be avoided. This policy was both a strategy to fight the US majors, and an acknowledgement of changed audiences and patterns of leisure. Indeed, prior to the 1970s, Gaumont had had no thought to preserve its priceless archive holdings. Gaumont Italia made its appearance in the Italian industry in the 1978-79 season under the direction of Renzo Rossellini. From an initial listino of 3 productions, it grew to 30 by 1983 when its enormous deficit led to the collapse of the company, the sacking of Rossellini, and difficulties in the French parent company. Its exhibition sector, which had always been profitable, was sold off to Cannon in order to limit the Italian company's liabilities.

Culturally, therefore, Gaumont had a considerable impact in the 1970s and 1980s in favouring the production of prestige, art cinema projects which then had wide, international theatrical release and television exposure. 'Its' directors included Rohmer, Bresson, Bergman, Fellini - and Rosi.

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## 7. CONCLUSION

These assessments suggest that Rosi interacts to a considerable extent with his screenwriters and directors of photography during the creative process and their work can be

seen to be a factor in the "Rosi" style. The editors and musicians with whom Rosi has worked have also been responsible for a large number of other projects and appear to tailor their contribution to the needs of the individual film or filmmaker.

On the production front, Rosi's films have moved steadily towards big budget co-productions for companies with a mass market profile. His last feature film, Dimenticare Palermo, was made for the Cecchi Gori company, which has always specialized in comedies and popular dramas for a mass audience. This company now has agreements with Fininvest and acts as Berlusconi's production arm. Rosi's film formed part of the much-heralded entry of Berlusconi into film production, when it was obviously felt necessary to include films with serious credentials initially. This seems to be no longer the case.

Rosi's current plans include a television co-production of Primo Levi's La tregua, in which the BBC has an interest.

1. His claim is that, "Je participe dans chaque film à toutes les opérations; c'est toujours moi qui ai l'idée du sujet, même si le scénario est écrit en collaboration." (interviewed in CIMENT, MICHEL: "Vivir desviviendose", Positif, 69, May 1965, page 5.
2. Interviewed by FUSCO, MARIA PIA: "Luchino, quell'amico generoso e geniale, passionale e infedele", La Repubblica, 7.1.1983.
3. Interviewed in Sight and Sound, Winter 1986-87, she admits that "Everybody is so surprised that I have worked on so many different kinds of films. But my work has something of the artisan in it. And that is something I like very much. I mean, to understand what the director is interested in and what he does best, and then to give him something which suits him..."



4. "Rosi lo conoscevo dai tempi che era aiuto di Visconti, lo conoscevo bene e ho lavorato con lui spesso, tutti i suoi primi film fino a Giuliano. Ecco, gli ultimi film che mi hanno dato l'idea che il cinema servisse a un discorso sulla società italiana, a fare chiarezza su certi problemi, sono stati quelli che ho fatto con lui. Su Salvatore Giuliano era stato fatto un lavoro di documentazione, di taglio, c'era una sceneggiatura abbastanza precisa ed è stata abbastanza rispettata, anche coi suoi spezzettamenti. Ma era Rosi a guidare tutta l'operazione, io lo seguivo, anche se a volte con qualche perplessità. Il problema era di dare un ordine ai fatti, dare al pubblico l'impressione della confusione dei fatti ma anche la possibilità di farsi un giudizio. Questi film oggi non li fa più nessuno, e nessuno chiede di farli. Io non credo che fosse il pubblico a rifiutarli, anzi. Li rifiutavano i produttori, li rifiutava il governo, e la critica non è che desse un grande aiuto. E figuriamoci se la DC poteva dare un grande aiuto a queste cose!". FALDINI, FRANCA & FOFI, GOFFREDO: L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano 1960-1969 (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979) pp 33-4.
5. Suso Cecchi D'Amico in Faldini & Fofi, op.cit. page 127. The scaletta represents the basic construction of the film script into sequences. On the page the scaletta looks like a ladder, with the plot events detailed in the spaces between rungs.
6. CALDIRON, ORIO & HOCHKOFER, MATILDE (Eds): Scrivere il cinema: Suso Cecchi D'Amico (Edizioni Dedalo, Bari, 1988) page 28.
7. Caldiron & Hochkofler, page 64.
8. MAYNE, RICHARD: 'Italian Cinema Today', BBC Radio 3, 15.11.1983.
9. Comitato d'Onore, Repubblica di San Marino, Tonino Guerra (Maggioli editore, Rimini, 1985).
10. RONDÌ, GIAN LUIGI: "Chi è?" in Comitato d'Onore, page 12.
11. PELLIZZARI, LORENZO: "Un filo rosso per il cinema italiano", in Ed. Comitato d'Onore, page 17.
12. Pellizzari, page 34. This is borne out by the testimony of Vittorio Taviani. Guerra's initial appeal was on the level of his poetic evocation of the rural, of fable and fantasy but, "A livello della struttura ha idee molto semplici e chiare e ci è stato molto utile anche in questo senso." Faldini & Fofi, Il cinema italiano d'oggi. 1970-1984, (Mondadori, Milan, 1984) page 544.
13. "Si tratta di immagini di facile lettura, immediate, spontanee, con le quali l'artista ambisce ad un tempo alla semplicità, a comunicare a tutti ... le proprie

sensazioni, ma nelle quali lo spettatore attento può elaborare concetti e significati "altri". DE SANT, MARCO: "Haiku a pastelli", Comitato d'Onore, op.cit. page 69.

14. Faldini & Fofi: Il cinema italiano d'oggi, page 338.
15. Faldini & Fofi: Il cinema italiano d'oggi, page 531.
16. GILI, JEAN: "Entretien avec Tonino Guerra", Positif, 300, Feb 1986, page 19.
17. SAINDERICHIN, GUY-PATRICK: "Trois Frères", Cahiers du Cinéma, no 326, July-Aug. 1981, page 66.
18. Faldini & Fofi: L'Avventurosa storia del cinema italiano, 1960-1969, page 345.
19. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Introduzione" in VISCONTI, LUCHINO: La terra trema, Transcribed by Enzo Ungari (Nuova Casa editrice L Cappelli spa, Bologna, 1977) page 11.
20. ROSI, FRANCESCO: "Personalità di Gianni Di Venanzo", Filmcritica, no 164, Feb 1966, page 77.
21. Faldini & Fofi: L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano, 1960-1969, page 280.
22. GARBARINO, ALESSANDRO: "Gianni di Venanzo. Un uomo che ha paura", Rivista del Cinematografo, 4/5, Apr/May 1965, pp 208-210.
23. CODELLI, LORENZO: "Entretien avec Pasqualino De Santis", Positif, 230, page 17.
24. CONSIGLIO, STEFANO & FERZETTI, FABIO: La bottega della luce: i direttori della fotografia, (Ubulibri, Milan, 1983) page 45.
25. Codelli, op.cit. page 17.
26. "il film, il vero film, non si fa al montaggio. Il montatore non può creare un film: il film artisticamente e già realizzato quando arriva in sede di montaggio. Noi possiamo soltanto aggiustare un film commercialmente errato." He goes on to describe how a bad film can be, to some extent saved by editing it with a fast lively rhythm so that the audience is not given time to notice more than necessary. CALISI, R & CILENTO, S: "Il montatore come editor", L'Eco del cinema e dello spettacolo, 77, 31.7.1954, pp 12-13.
27. GILI, JEAN: Francesco Rosi: Cinéma et Pouvoir, (Editions du cerf, Paris, 1976) page 168.



28. Rosi does not always shoot the same amount of film stock. For Carmen, he shot less as he did not wish to add anything to the music; for Cronaca di una morte annunciata an enormous amount was shot, with up to 3 cameras for the set pieces such as the arrival of the archbishop, and the rhythm varied between Volonté's narrative, and the chronicle of the rest of the film. CODELLI, LORENZO: "A la moviola avec Rosi: Ruggero Mastroianni, monteur", Positif, 315, May 1987, page 12.
29. He used the name Piero Morgan in the '50s, perhaps for reasons not unrelated to the enormous scandal of the mysterious (and unresolved) death of Wilma Montesi in which Piccioni was implicated. This affected the career of his father, Attilio, who was Secretary of the Christian Democrat party at the time. TURONE, SERGIO: "Il reggicalze nel becco del piccione" in Corrotti e corruttori: dall'Unità d'Italia all P2, (Laterza, Bari, 1984) pp 206-8.
30. Interview with Francesco Rosi in Gili, page 167.
31. "Chez Rosi on peut croire qu'on entre dans un certain endroit, qu'on tourne sur du réel, mais c'est faux: on change les couleurs, on équilibre les images, c'est toujours un très gros travail". CODELLI, LORENZO: "De Rosi à Tarkovski: Andrea Crisanti, décorateur", Positif, 315, May 1987, page 10. The small square where l'ozioso sits in Cadaveri eccellenti was remodelled for example, to eliminate the green of the grass around the central memorial (see my interview in Appendix One).
32. CODELLI, LORENZO & NIOGRET, HUBERT: "Entretien avec Franco Cristaldi", Positif, 316, June 1987, pp 25-6. Although Lux made it possible to experiment with new products, the company was already in trouble. Suso Cecchi D'Amico attributed Cristaldi's start to compensation for a car accident which enabled Vides to be set up for feature production. (Faldini & Fofi: L'avventurosa storia del cinema italiano. 1960-1969, page 335.)
33. "Per natura non sono un benefattore. La convenienza c'è. Si ha bisogno di attori... Non si può andare avanti con quei cinque o sei che oggi ci sono. Tutti gli stanno addosso.... I valori del divismo e della semplice bellezza oggi sono superati. Ci vuole il talento, il professionismo, la personalità, doti che vanno scovate e educate..." L M: "Un produttore vuol provare a "costruire" i suoi attori" Stampa, 9.8.1969. It is no coincidence therefore that Rosi's first film, La sfida, starred Rosanna Schiaffino out of Cristaldi's 'stable' but the difficulties resulting from this policy can be deduced from the fact that her performance, minor as it is, had to be dubbed.



34. He felt his own collaboration with RAI on Rosi's Cristo si è fermato a Eboli to be very inequitable. Although theoretically a 50/50 arrangement, in practice Vides' input amounted to 75% of the directly and indirectly attributable costs, and 25% to RAI. In an interview he characterises the problem of television's voracious appetite for films as exploitation - "... se un film medio va mediocrementemente, incassa un miliardo, vale a dire ottiene un milione di spettatori, 1000 lire per spettatore. Se quattro anni dopo quel film va in TV, lo vedono 10 milioni almeno di persone, e la RAI paga una lira per persona poiché lo compra a circa 10 milioni." (LAUDADIO, FELICE: "Se il nostro cinema muore ci vorranno 30 anni per ricostruirlo", L'Unità, 28.10.1979. Thus, although co-production deals with television remain a necessity today, it is equally true that, where RAI is concerned, without a good cinema exhibition run, the film will not be a success in purely financial terms.
35. PINTO, TONINO: "Prospettive ottime, se si creano le condizioni", interview with Alberto Grimaldi, Cinema d'oggi, 12, 20.6.84, page 8.

## FILMOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

ad - art director; asst. dir - assistant director; b - book; bw - black & white; c - camera; choreo - choreography; co - colour; d - director; ed - editor; ex.p - executive producer; lp - leading players; m - music; p - producer; pc - production company; ph - photography; pm - production manager; p.sup - production supervisor; sc - script; set c. - set construction; sd - set design; su - subject.

- 1948 Assistant Director, La terra trema (d Luchino Visconti), also directed its dubbing into the "Italian" version.
- 1950 Assistant Director, Domenica d'agosto (d Luciano Emmer)  
Assistant Director, Tormento (d Raffaello Matarazzo)
- 1951 Assistant Director, I figli di nessuno (d Raffaello Matarazzo)  
Co-writer & Assistant Director, Parigi è sempre Parigi (d Luciano Emmer)  
Co-writer & Assistant Director, Bellissima (d Luchino Visconti)
- /52 Completes direction of Camicie rosse after Goffredo Alessandrini resigns
- 1952 Assistant Director, I vinti (d Michelangelo Antonioni)  
Co-writer, subject of Processo alla città with Ettore Giannini (d Luigi Zampa)
- 1953 Assistant Director, Carossello Napoletano (d Ettore Giannini)
- 1954 Assistant Director, Proibito (d Mario Monicelli)  
Assistant Director, Senso (d Luchino Visconti)
- 1955 Co-writer, Racconti Romani (d Gianni Franciolini)
- 1956 Co-writer & Assistant Director, Il bigamo (d Luciano Emmer)  
Co-writer & co-Director with Vittorio Gassman, (Kean, genio e sregolatezza)

PRIMARY TEXTS

- 1958 La sfida  
su/d: Francesco Rosi. su/sc: Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Enzo Provenzale, Francesco Rosi. asst.dir: Giulio Questi, Nando Cicero, Roberto Pariante. ph: Gianni Di Venanzo. c: Enrico Menczer. ed: Mario Serandrei. set dir: Franco Mancini. co: Marilù Carteny. s: Ovidio del Grande. p.sup: Gino Millozza. m: Roman Vlad. p.man: Enzo Provenzale. p: Franco Cristaldi. pc: Lux/Vides/Cinecittà/Suevia Film. lp: Rosanna Schiaffino, José Suarez, Nino Vingelli, José Jaspe, Tina Castigliana, Pasquale Cannemo, Decimo Cristiani, Elsa Valentini Ascoli, Nello Ascoli, Salvatore



Cafiè, Guido Canta, Gennaro di Napoli, Elsa Fiore.

1959 I magliari

su/sc/d: Francesco Rosi. su/sc Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Francesco Rosi. asst.dir: Rinaldo Ricci, Jerry Maco, Roberto Pariente. ed: Mario Serandrei. ph: Gianni Di Venanzo. c: Ajace Parolin. set c: Dieter Bartels. co: Graziella Urbinati. s: Kurt Doubrowsky. m: Piero Piccioni. p.man: Enzo Provenzale. p.sup: Pietro Notarianni. p: Franco Cristaldi. pc: Vides Titanus. lp: Alberto Sordi, Belinda Lee, Renato Salvatore, Aldo Giuffré, Nino Vingelli, Nino Di Napoli, Pasquale Cennamo, Aldo Bufi Landi, Carmine Ippolito, Josef Dahmen, Linda Vandal, Else Knott.

1961 Salvatore Giuliano

d: Francesco Rosi. su/sc: Francesco Rosi, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Enzo Provenzale, Franco Solinas. asst.dir: Franco Indovina, Nando Cicero, Roberto Pariente. sd: Sergio Canevari, Carlo Egidi. Co: Marilù Carteny. ph: Gianni Di Venanzo. c: Pasquale De Santis. s: Claudio Majelli. m: Piero Piccione. p.man: Enzo Provenzale. ed: Mario Serandrei. p: Franco Cristaldi. pc: Lux Film, Lux Film Vides/Galatea. lp: Salvo Randone, Frank Wolff, Federico Zardi, Pietro Cammarata, Giuseppe Teti, Cosimo Torino, Giuseppe Calandra, Pietro Franzone, Sennuccio Benelli.

1963 Le mani sulla città

d: Francesco Rosi. Su: Francesco Rosi, Raffaele La Capria. sc: Francesco Rosi, Raffaele La Capria, Enzo Provenzale, Enzo Forcella. asst.dir: Fernando Cicero, Roberto Pariente, Marco Guarnaschelli, Mario Forges Davanzati. ph: Gianni Di Venanzo. c: Pasquale De Santis. s: Vittorio Trentino. set dir: Sergio Canevari. co: Marilù Carteny. ad: Massimo Rosi. ed: Mario Serandrei. m: Piero Piccioni. p: Lionello Santi. p.man: Enzo Provenzale. pc: Lux Film, Vides/Galatea. lp: Rod Steiger, Salvo Randone, Guido Alberti, Marcello Cannavale, Dante Di Pinto, Alberto Cannochia, Carlo Fermariello, Terenzio Cordova, Gaetano Grimaldi Filioli, Angelo D'Alessandro, Vincenzo Metafora, Dany Paris.

1965 Il momento della verità

d/su: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Pedro Portabella, Ricardo Muñoz Suay, Pedro Beltrán. asst.dir: Ricardo Muñoz Suay, Marco Guarnaschelli. ph: Gianni di Venanzo, Ajace Parolin, Pasquale De Santis. ed: Mario Serandrei. m: Piero Piccioni. s: Claudio Maielli, Mario Ronchetti. p.man: Enzo Provenzale. ex.p: Antonio Cervi, Francesco Rosi. pc: Federiz (Rome), AS Film (Madrid). lp: Miguel Mateo "Miguelin", José Gomez Sevillano, Pedro Basauri Pedrucho, Linda Christian, Luque Gago, Salvador Mateo, Manuel Ruiz Servana, Francisco Caño, José Rodriguez Matia, Manolo Perez Moratilla, José Vizcaino.

1967 C'era una volta

d: Francesco Rosi. su/sc: Tonino Guerra, Raffaele La



Capria, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Francesco Rosi.  
 asst.dir: Marco Guarnaschelli, Ada Palombi. ph: Pasquale  
 De Santis. set dir: Piero Poletto. co: Giulio Coltellaci.  
 m: Piero Piccioni. s: Claudio Majelli, Mario Morigi. ed:  
 Jolanda Benvenuti. p. Carlo Ponti. p.man: Jone Tuzi. pc:  
 Compagnia Cinematografica Champion (Rome), Les Films  
 Concordia (Paris) for MGM. lp: Sophia Loren, Omar Sharif,  
 Dolores Del Rio, George Wilson, Leslie French, Carlo  
 Pisacane, Marina Malfatti, Anna Nogara, Rita Forzano,  
 Rosemary Martin, Carlotta Barilli, Fleur Mombelli, Anna  
 Liotti, Kathleen St John.

1970 Uomini contro

d: Francesco Rosi. su: b Un anno sull'altipiano by Emilio  
 Lussu. sc: Francesco Rosi, Raffaele La Capria, Tonino  
 Guerra. asst.dir: Marco Guarnaschelli, Svetislav  
 Pavlovic. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. c: Mario Cimini. co:  
 Franco Carretti, Gabriella Pescucci. ad: Andrea Crisanti.  
 ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. m: Piero Piccioni. p: Francesco  
 Rosi, Luciano Perugia. p.man: Carlo Lastricati, Donko  
 Buljan. pc: Prima Cinematografica (Rome), Jadran Film  
 (Zagreb). lp: Mark Frechette, Alain Cuny, Gian Maria  
 Volonté, Giampiero Albertini, Pier Paolo Capponi, Franco  
 Graziosi, Mario Feliciani, Alberto Mastino, Brunetto Del  
 Vita, Smojver Zdravko, Nino Vingelli, Antonio Pavan,  
 Francesco Acampora, Emilio Bonucci, Spartaco Conversi,  
 Maurizio Mastino, Daria Nicolodi, Luigi Pignatelli,  
 Gianni Pulone, Franca Sciutto, Mario Pischiutta.

1972 Il caso Mattei

d: Francesco Rosi. su: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra. sc:  
 Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, Nerio Minuzzo, Tito De  
 Stefano. asst.dir: Marco Guarnaschelli. ph: Pasqualino De  
 Santis. c: Mario Cimini. ad: Andrea Crisanti. co: Franco  
 Carretti. m: Piero Piccioni. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. s:  
 Mario Bramonti. p.man: Gino Millozza. p: Franco  
 Cristaldi. pc: Vides, Verona Cinematografica (Rome). lp:  
 Gian Maria Volonté, Luigi Squarzina, Peter Baldwin,  
 Renato Romano, Franco Graziosi, Gianfranco Ombuen, Elio  
 Jotta, Edda Ferronau, Luciano Colitti, Accursio Di Leo,  
 Terenzio Cordova, Giuseppe Lo Presti, Camillo Milli, Aldo  
 Barberito, Jean Rougeul, Dario Micaelis, Vittorio  
 Fanfoni, Nino Drago, Nestor Garay, Felice Fulchignoni,  
 Sennuccio Benelli, Furio Colombo, Ugo Zatterin, Blaise  
 Morissey, Gainni Farneti, Alessio Baume, Umberto D'Arrò,  
 Salvo Licata, Giuseppe Roselli, Ferruccio Parri, Michele  
 Pantaleone, Arrigo Benedetti, Thyraud de Vosioli,  
 Francesco Rosi.

1973 Lucky Luciano

d/su: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Lino Jannuzzi,  
 Tonino Guerra. asst.dir: Gianni Arduini. ph: Pasqualino  
 De Santis. c: Mario Cimini. s: Fernando Pescetelli. ad:  
 Andrea Crisanti. co: Marisa Crimi, Luciana Fortini. m:  
 Piero Piccioni. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. p: Franco  
 Cristaldi. p.man: Gino Millozza. exec.p: Gustavo Berne.  
 pc: Vides (Rome), Les Films de la Boétie (Paris), in



assoc. with Harbor Productions, (NY). lp: Gian Maria Volonté, Vincent Gardenia, Silverio Blasi, Charles Cioffi, Larry Bates, Magda Konopka, Jacques Monod, Dino Curcio, Karin Petersen, Edmund O'Brien, Charles Siragusa, Rod Steiger, P M Pasinetti, Luigi Infantino.

1976 Cadaveri eccellenti

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, Lino Jannuzzi, b: Il contesto by Leonardo Sciascia. asst.dir: Gianni Arduini, Bruno Cortini. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. c: Mario Cimini. co: Enrico Sabbatini. s: Mario Bramonti. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. m: Piero Piccioni. p: Alberto Grimaldi. p.man: Alessandro von Normann. pc: Produzioni Europei Associate (Rome), Les Artistes Associés (Paris). lp: Lino Ventura, Alain Cuny, Charles Vanel, Max von Sydow, Fernando Rey, Renato Salvatori, Tino Carraro, Paolo Bonacelli, Marcel Bozzuffi, Maria Carta, Tina Aumont, Paolo Graziosi, Luigi Pistilli, Alfonso Gatto, Anna Proclemer, Giorgio Zampa, Silverio Blasi.

1979 Cristo si è fermato a Eboli

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, Raffaele La Capria, from the book by Carlo Levi. asst.dir: Gianni Arduini. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. c: Mario Cimini. co: Enrico Sabbatini. m: Piero Piccioni. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. s: Mario Bramonti. p.man: Alessandro von Normann. p: Franco Cristaldi, Nicola Carraro. co-prod: Yves Gasser, Yves Payrot. pc: RAI 2, Vides Cinematografica (Rome), Actions Films (Paris), Gaumont, ZDF (Mainz). lp: Gian Maria Volonté, Paolo Bonacelli, Alain Cuny, Lea Massari, Irene Papas, François Simon, Antonio Jodice, Pasquale Tartaro, Luigi Infantino, Lidia Bavusi, Vincenzo Vitale, Francesco Callari, Antonio Allocca, Vincenzo Licata, Accursio Di Leo, Francesco Capotorto, Muzzi Loffredo, Carmelo Lauria, Tommaso Polgar.

1981 Tre fratelli

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, from the book Tretij syn by Andrej Platonov. asst.dir: Gianni Arduini. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. c: Mario Cimini. s: Mario Bramonti. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. ad: Andrea Crisanti. m: Piero Piccioni. co: Gabriella Pescucci, Onelio Millenotti. p: Giorgio Nocella, Antonio Macri. p.man: Franco Ballati. pc: Iter Film (Rome), Gaumont (Paris). lp: Philippe Noiret, Charles Vanel, Michele Placido, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, Andrea Ferreol, Maddalena Crippa, Sara Tafuri, Marta Zoffoli, Tino Schirinzi, Simonetta Stefanelli.

1984 Carmen

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, from the opera by Georges Bizet, libretto by Henri Meilhac & Ludovic Halévy, based on the novel by Prosper Mérimée. asst.dir: Giovanni Arduini. ph. Pasqualino De Santis. c: Franco Bruni, Noël Very. ad/co: Enrico Job.

ed: Ruggero Mastroianni, Colette Semprun. choreo: Antonio Gades. set design: Gianni Giovaghonni, Pierre Thevenet. co: Gino Persico. m: Orchestre National de France & chorus of Radio-France, conducted by Lorin Maazel. s: Michel Glotz, Guy Level, Harald Maury. p.man: Alessandro von Normann. p: Patrice Ledoux. pc: Gaumont/Marcel Dassault (Paris), Opéra Film Produzione (Rome). lp: Julia Migenes-Johnson, Placido Domingo, Ruggero Raimondi, Faith Esham, Jean-Philippe Lafont, Gérard Garino, Susan Daniel, Lilian Watson, John Paul Bogart, François Leroux, Julien Guimar, Accursio Di Leo, Maria Campano, Cristina Hoyos, Enrique El Cojo.

1987 Cronaca di una morte annunciata

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Tonino Guerra, from the book by Gabriel García Márquez. asst.dir: Carlo Lastricati, Gianni Arduini, Salvo Basile, (Colombia) Glaudia Gomez, Eric Dionysius. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. c: Franco Bruni, Massimiliano Sano. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. ad: Andrea Crisanti. m: Piero Piccioni. co: Enrico Sabbatini. p: Yves Gasser, Francis von Büren. pc: Italmedia (Rome), Soprofilms/Les Films Ariane/FR3 Films Production (Paris), with RAI, in collaboration with Focine (Bogotá). lp: Rupert Everett, Ornella Muti, Gian Maria Volonté, Irene Papas, Lucia Rosé, Anthony Delon, Sergi Mateu, Carlos Miranda, Rogerio Miranda, Alain Cuny, Silverio Blasi, Vicky Hernandez, Leonor Gonzalez, Caroline Lang, Carolina Rosi.

1990 Dimenticare Palermo

d: Francesco Rosi. sc: Francesco Rosi, Gore Vidal, Tonino Guerra, from the novel Oublier Palerme by Edmonde Charles-Roux. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. ad: Andrea Crisanti (Italy), Stephen Graham (USA). m: Ennio Morricone. co: Enrico Sabbatini. p: Mario & Vittorio Cecchi Gori. p.man: Alessandro von Normann. pc: Cecchi Gori/Group Leopard/Reteitalia (Rome), Gaumont (Paris). lp: James Belushi, Mimi Rogers, Joss Ackland, Philippe Noiret, Vittorio Gassman, Carolina Rosi, Harry Davis, Marco Leonardi, Tiziana Stella, Ronald Yamamoto, Tyto Rugins, Tibor Feldman, Nicholas Levitin, Michael Gill.

1992 Diario Napoletano

d: Francesco Rosi. Asst.dir: Gianni Arduini. sc: Francesco Rosi, Raffaele La Capria. ph: Pasqualino De Santis. ed: Ruggero Mastroianni. m: Piero Piccioni. ex.p: Alessandro von Normann. p: Ferruccio Santini. pc: RAI 3, MV Produzione.



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